DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 264 435 CE 043 162

AUTHOR Borman, Kathryn M., Ed.; And Others
TITLE The Adolescent Worker.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Nov 85
GRANT NIE-G-83-0005
NOTE 237p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC10 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Career Choice; Case Studies; Dismissal (Personnel); *Education Work Relationship; *Employer Employee Relationship; Employment Experience; Employment Patterns; *Employment Practices; *Entry Workers; Job Layoff; Job Performance; Job Search Methods; Job Training; Labor Turnover; Longitudinal Studies; Occupational Aspiration; Unemployment; *Vocational Adjustment; Work Attitudes; Work Environment; Working Hours; Young Adults; *Youth Employment

ABSTRACT

The Adolescent Worker Study was designed to provide an in-depth analysis of the job experiences and related life histories of out-of-school working youth. To do this, a team of investigators first identified work sites across a range of industrial sectors that were currently engaged in hiring young workers between the ages of 17 and 21. Then, the team engaged the participation of the next young person to be hired in each work site. As a result, 25 case histories were compiled and analyzed. The case studies of youth in work settings provide an anthology of the meaning of work for adolescents employed in organizationally and technologically diverse work settings. The research has uncovered the nature of workplace processes affecting all young workers' job experience and future mobility, namely, finding a job, combating negative attributions, fitting into a job, receiving training, negotiating authority, and quitting or losing a job. Although it is difficult to generalize, the research indicates that accounts of the transition to work by out-of-school, noncollege-educated youth must consider at least these six processes. All young people entering jobs can benefit by understanding that these six dimensions of job-related experiences are likely to become issues at some point in their work lives. (KC)

THE ADOLESCENT WORKER

Kathryn M. Borman
University of Cincinnati

Margaretha Vreeburg Izzo
The National Center for Research in Vocational Education

Elizabeth M. Penn
University of Cincinnati

Jane Reisman
Pacific Lutheran University

Edited by

Kathryn M. Borman

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090

November 1985

FUNDING INFORMATION

Project Title:	Field Study of Employed and Nonemployed Youth
Grant Number:	NIE-G-83-0005, P-1
Project Number:	715903
Act Under Which Funds Were Adminstered:	P.L. 96-88
Source of Contract:	U.S. Department of Education National Institute of Education Washington, D.C. 20202
Project Officer:	Ronald Bucknam
Contractor:	The National Center for Research in Vocational Education The Ohio State University Columbus, OH 43210-1090
Executive Director:	Robert E. Taylor
Disclaimer:	This publication was prepared pursuant to a contract with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgement in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official U.S. Department of Education position or policy.
Discrimination Prohibited:	Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Therefore, the Research Program on Employability, like every program or activity receiving financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education, must be operated in compliance with these laws.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table

Figure

FOREWORD

The Adolescent Worker Study looks at the relationship between demand and supply variables. Specifically, the study examines the process by which youth learn and are trained to carry out work tasks and (2) traces the process by which youth retain or lose employment in specific job settings. By selecting different industries hiring youth and by studying the same group of youth over an extended period of time, this study has captured a cynamic perspective of how youth adjust to work in technologically diverse settings. This report covers topics such as (1) the type of work activities that young people do, (2) how youth workers get along with their supervisors and co-workers, (3) the nature of training that young people receive on the job, and (4) young people's attitude toward and adjustment to the world of work. This descriptive report should useful in designing policies and practices to help schools and businesses become more effective in preparing youth for work.

We wish to express our gratitude to the National Institute of Education for sponsoring this study and to Ronald Bucknam who served as project officer. We want to thank the members of the technical panel for their suggestions in the development and execution of this study. The committee consisted of Ellen Greenberger, University of California-Irvine; David Wellman, University of California-Irvine; David Wellman, University of California-Santa Cruz; Ronald Corwin, The Ohio State University; Stephen Hills, Acting Director of the Center for Human Resource Research; Hirschel Kasper, Oberlin College; and John Bishop, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

In addition to serving on the technical panel, Dr. Hills also reviewed a working draft of this report. Others who reviewed this report are Phillip Wexler, University of Rochester; Juliet Miller, Associate Director for the Infomration Systems Division, and Catherine Ashmore, Research Specialist, both at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. The report benefited greatly from the insightful critiques provided by these individuals.

Finally, we wish to thank all of the youth and employers who participated in this study. Although anonymity precludes mentioning their names, we nevertheless want to express our sincere appreciation for the time and cooperation they extended to the research staff.

Recognition is due to the co-principal investigators of this study, Kathryn M. Borman, University of Cincinnati, and Jane Reisman, Pacific Lutheran College, for the design and supervision of data collection and data analysis; John Bishop, Associate Director for the Research Division, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, for overseeing the study; Margaretha Vreeburg Izzo, Program Associate, for assisting in collecting and processing the data and for managing the preparation of the final report and user-driven deliverables; David Price and Angela Valentine for processing the computerized database; Janet Kiplinger and staff, for editorial assistance; and Jane Croy and Angela Valentine for typing the report.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Young out-of-school workers are this nation's most mobile work force participants. Most unemployed 16 to 20-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and who subsequently locate jobs remain in their new positions less than 6 months (Borus 1982). This employment pattern has frequently been identified as a social problem attributable to such characteristics as vocational immaturity, inadequate preparation for the work, and poor work attitudes. In contrast, it is important to consider the problems associated with youth entering the world of work as primarily structural in origin. Rather than pointing to the shortcomings of youth, the emphasis should be upon those economic and social constraints that influence the experiences of young workers in the labor market.

Recent research has challenged the assumption that youth are primarily at fault for failure to locate and hold jobs. One important line of investigation, falling at the intersection of sociology and economics, has attempted to align youth's values, personality development, and labor market experiences with the constraints and opportunities of youth labor market struc-tures. This research is best exemplified in the longitudinal studies carried out by Borus (1982) and his colleagues. In the National Longitudinal Survey (1982), the effects of region, residence in a metropolitan vs. rural setting, and other extrinsic factors including shifting labor market opportunities were examined for different sets of individuals as they moved from school to work (ibid.). Findings from this research indicate group variations in job-finding and job-holding patterns for youth. For example, young women seeking jobs frequently have child care issues to resolve; young black men seeking work often encounter a hostile institutional reception from employers, whereas their white male counterparts are more likely to have personal contacts to smooth their way (ibid.).

In order to provide a broad-based understanding of the labor market experiences of youth, the focus of the Adolescent Worker Study is directed upon such questions as these:

- What jobs are available to youth looking for work? Who gets jobs?
- Who gets paid better wages?
- How do labor market shifts affect youth?
- From the perspective of youth, what are the reasons for taking jobs?
- What job search activities are most frequently used by youth?
- Once on the job, what expectations do youth hold for their future work-related activities? How do young workers "fit into" jobs? And what happens if they don't?

In the final analysis, the transition from school to work for youth involves them in a series of job-shopping, job-holding, and job-leaving experiences that allow most youth to gain increasing sophistication about the world of work, though not without considerable stress. This stress could be minimized by creating an awareness among employers of the importance of erecting "bridge" or transitional jobs for high school leavers and graduates, a point that will be explored in the final chapter of this publication.

Once employed, young workers are constrained by structural features of the job setting itself. These include the amount of time allocated by employers for training and supervision, in addition to the frequently unat-tractive and cognitively circumscribed characteristics of tasks encountered by young workers in the job that they typically hold. The nature of these job-specific experiences is the second focus for study in the field-based research reported in subsequent chapters. This research in large part follows upon previous work investigating the effects of part-time employment on adolescent attitudes, values, and orientation to school and work. Greenberger and her co-workers (1982) concluded that most young workers in their first part-time jobs experienced little rudimentary training and supervision, much less close mentoring from adults on the job. Moreover, these same investigators noted that the jobs themselves provided highly limited opportunities for learning social skills.

Not all work situations are narrow and constraining. When jobs are monitored by a closely attached supervisor or co-worker and training is afforded to young workers, tasks may be more challenging and skill learning on the job may be enhanced. David Moore's (forthcoming) sutdy of young interns in field-based work study job placements reveals that these interns typically experienced a growing understanding of the task demands, the programmatic features of the work environment, and the task-processing skill requirements characteristic of their jobs. By constructing what Moore terms "cognitive scaffolding," young workers gradually come to an awareness of the linkages and relationships among these job characteristics. Significantly, this awareness is enhanced by the careful, conscious structuring of job learning by experienced colleagues and trainers of youth.

In assembling a view of job-finding, job-holding, and job-leaving experiences of youth, our interest centers upon such questions as these: What performance and cognitive processing demands are inherent in job tasks performed by youth? How are job training and task monitoring carried out by co-workers, supervisors, and others in the workplace? From the perspective of youth, what factors contribute to job-leaving? How do youths' perceptions of factors related to job leaving compare with those of their supervisors? If youth do get fixed in a job, how do training and informal relations (or other factors) contribute to this process? These questions, in addition to those raised earlier in connection with the labor market experiences of youth, are the focus of the analysis in this publication.

Scope of the Study

As youth leave high school and find jobs, they encounter experiences that allow them to make choices about their futures. Unfortunately, for most this involves scaling down their dreams. For example, one young woman in the Adolescent Worker Study began her work in a major financial institution in downtown

Cincinnati. She expressed her career interest in three areas: law, architecture, and secretarial work. However, after 9 months on the job, during which time, she conducted small-scale, job-shopping forays into other financial and real estate sector businesses, she began to narrow her ambitions. She decided that given her limited resources, filing statements and organizing returns to mail to customers would likely occupy her time for a while, although she still hoped eventually to go into a secretarial career.

This young woman typifies the thousands of young workers whose limited resources for education beyond high school force them to go to work. Faced with limited choices, these young workers seek out the most favorable employment circumstances. For most, their first jobs hold very few intrinsic rewards. Thus, youth become cynical about the workplace and frequently grow discouraged about their futures.

The Adolescent Worker Study was designed to provide an in-depth analysis of the job experiences and related life histories of out-of-school working youth. To do this, a team of investigators first identified work sites across a range of industrial sectors that were currently engaged in hiring young workers between the ages of 17 and 21. Then, the team engaged the participation of the next young person to be hired in each work site. Chapter two of this publication describes the problem of gaining access to the work sites and provides a description of the work settings and the 25 young workers who agreed to participate in the research. The remaining chapters are organized to examine the issues that confront adolescent workers as they move into the workplace. In order to examine the unfolding patterns of young workers' career and life histories, job-related problems that presented themselves to virtually every participant in the study were selected. This publication is organized to examine these several problems by providing documentation from the 25 case studies assembled over the course of the study.

The first problem encountered by the adolescent job seeker is locating a job. Strategies used by youth to find work are examined in chapter three. Once the young person is hired, he or she faces the problem of establishing an identity as a competent worker. Often young workers are besieged with negative attributions by employers and co-workers whose values and perspectives on work are not shared by the new employee. The problem of negative attributions in the workplace is explored in chapter four. Fitting into a job entails more than learning the skills required to cope with the technological demands of job-related tasks. Successfully integrating oneself into a job encompasses mastering a range of social learning tasks such as when to take breaks when to offer advice, and the like. In other words, fitting into a job requires that young workers understand and manipulate workplace environment to their own benefit, thus, the focus of chapter five. In Chapter six, training in the workplace is examined by considering opportunities for young workers to learn on the job. Understanding and accommodating authority in the workplace is the subject of chapter seven. Young workers face difficulties in negotiating authority structures in work settings because of their lack of experience in comparable settings and because employers seem predisposed to encounter insolence or indifference when they hire adolescent workers. Chapter eight examines the process of learning a job and locating other work. Most of the young workers in the study changed jobs at least once. How and why they did so is the topic of this chapter. Finally, in chapter nine, the policy implica-

tions of this research are considered. Of particular importance are the recommendations for support and assistance to youth in making the transition from school to work.

Participants in the Research

During the course of the study, 25 participants who worked in a total of 46 different job settings during the period of the study were recruited. The first observations were made in May 1983, and observations continued through May of the following year. Thus, some participants in the research were observed for 12 months whereas others were involved in the study for shorter periods of time.

Fictitious names were used to identify the 11 males and 14 fe-males who were recruited for the study. Most came from working class or lower middle class family backgrounds as indicated by their parents' occupations. Some (Val, Lisa, Bob and Diane) have upper middle class family backgrounds. All but one of these (Val) were enrolled in college preparatory courses while in high school. The majority of the participants were enrolled in either general track or vocational courses during high school. Seven participants (Dick, Al, Charles, Kelvin, Betty, Laurie, and Val) attended vocational schools while two (Peter and Lisa) attended parochial (Catholic) schools.

Participants reported a wide range of average grades. A few (Betty, Kelvin, Lisa, and Diane) received mostly A's during their school careers, while the majority reported their average grade as C. Our participants ranged in age from 18 to 22 at the start of the study. Most were approximately 18 years of age and had graduated from high school in June 1983.

Although most eventually changed jobs during the course of their participation in the study, several (Al, Rod, Ray, Peter, Helen, and Jerry) were still employed by the same companies that had initially hired them and were working similar jobs when the study ended. Also, with the exception of Helen, these workers had received at least one salary increase their employment.

With very few exceptions (Al, Charles, Rod, Val, Donna, Peter, and Terry), these young workers were employed part-time in their jobs and their hours were frequently scheduled at variable times during the week. In many cases, workers' schedules were not posted by employers until the beginning of the week in question.

The jobs themselves can be characterized as entry-level, low-skill or, in many cases, dead-end positions. Some had possibilities for advancement. For example, a shop hand in a sheet metal shop could become a foreman eventually; a mail clerk in a bank could advance to department supervisor with minimal additional training. However, most jobs provided occupants with limited opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and to advance to another position in the organization. Although the position of health spa instructor held by three participants (Laurie, Lisa, and Jenny) included collateral responsibilities, these were considered demeaning and, worst of all, "boring" by the young workers.

Wages offered by the jobs held by participants in the research were varied. Most jobs paid the minimum wage ($3.35 per hr.). Raises of a few cents per hour were contingent upon favorable evaluations after a 30-60 or 90-day probation period.

Conclusions

Finding a Job

Finding work is a difficult process for most young workers seeking to join the labor force. Youth are beset by both structural problems inherent in the dismal picture of youth unemployment that confronts them and the personal dilemmas that inevitably arise for all young people during this period in the life cycle.

What seems most striking to the adult observer about adolescent job-seekers is the mixture of naivete and cynicism that characterizes their attitude toward finding a job. On the one hand, young workers believe that self-presentation and good luck are critical to finding and eventually getting a job. They often believe they can maintain their current relationships, stay in their hometowns, locate just the right job, and perhaps even attend college, all at the same time in the face of unemployment and frustrating job searches. On the other hand, they suspect, probably correctly, that particular career avenues are sexist or biased in other ways and that counseling and other support services are poorly equipped to provide advice about particular jobs that might interest them.

Health and emotional problems may become a shield against the reality of being out of a job for several months. Young people may overlook the handicap their problems and dilemmas present to employers. Employers of adolescent workers are likely to be primarily interested in male teenage workers because of their physical strength, agility, ability to tolerate long hours, and the like. One fast food manager in the study remarked, "That's the main reason we hire teenage workers, they're strong, can move fast, and don't tire out too easily during a rough shift." Employers of female adoles-cent workers appear to be interested in their abilities to endure isolated, menial, and boring work.

Finding a job appears easiest for workers of both sexes if they are well connected into jobs through friends and relatives who provide them with key contacts in job settings. However, contacts by themselves are not sufficient to assure employment. Perhaps the best model to describe job search activity links both economic and sociological factors:

> In the economic model, both prospective job holder and employer search. Each uses a rational calculus to determine whether to search one more time period or whether to stop searching and accept the current job (hire the best person who now is available) or drop out of the labor force (not fill the position). The important assumption of the economist is that information must be generated by conscious actions on the part of the searchers. For the sociologist, however, job search information may be a product of race, sex, or position within a firm. By selecting

certain jobs, information on other jobs may be readily available as a kind of fringe benefit. "The job searcher may be unlikely to know this in advance, or other factors of the job may far override this aspect. Nevertheless, if the time comes when a new job must be obtained, some people who happen to have gotten information-rich jobs will find the process all that much easier than others. In this sense, discrimination against blacks and women could occur due to their bad positioning in the "information network." Furthermore, this positioning comes about more from sociological processes than from conscious, rational strategy. From the job occupant's point of view, this positioning may seem to be purely "luck." (Hills, personal communication, 16 November 1984).

Attributions in the Workplace

At present, very little research focuses on the nature and importance of attributions in the work setting. However, the process of attribution and the factors affect it have far-reaching consequences for the young worker. Additional research is needed to identify all of the forces that contribute to the formation of causal inferences in the marketplace.

A better understanding of contextual variables and their impact on worker behavior may alter the assessment and evaluation of candidates for employment by shifting the emphasis from stable, dispositional characteristics to situation-specific behaviors. Such modifications have ramifications for the employer, the job seeker, and the worker who is under consideration for promotion. In all these cases, the impact of the work environment is equally as important as the internal dispositions of the individuals involved.

Employers may discover that the employment practices and the work environments, not the workers, are problematic. Where stereotypical expectations and cross-cultural misunderstandings contribute to discrimination, multicultural awareness and human relations strategies can affect equality of opportunity. Multicultural awareness in the training and assessment of young workers is one essential means of easing the school-to-work transition for many. To encourage teachers to grapple with the demands of education in a pluralistic society seems a futile enterprise when their students graduate into a workplace that is overwhelmingly dominated by the values and expectations of the white, male, middle-class work ethic.

The application of attribution theory to the social organization of the work setting is one of many opportunities for educators to have an impact on the industrial setting. It provides one means of creating a two-way flow of information between education and industry, instead of the current, one-way trend from industry to the schools.

Most important, the application of attribution theory has benefits for the individual worker. So much of our current knowledge is rooted in the perceptions of employers and experienced workers that we rarely see the work site throught the eyes of the newly employed youth. There is a need, as Van Maanen (1977) argues, for the kind of qualitative data that enable us to see the "social reality" of the work world as the young worker sees it. Attribution

theory provides a framework through which the new worker can gain self-understanding as well as insight into the actions and reactions of employers and co-workers. By understanding the perceptions of others and the factors which affect those perceptions, young workers increase their probability of success in the work setting. Given the tendency for the attributions of significant others to become self-fulfilling prophecies for the young person (Bar-Tal 1979, Harvey and Weary 1981), such knowledge can prevent youth from blaming themselves for failures that have little or no relationship to real performance or their future potential in alternative work settings. This realization is especially critical in light of evidence that "cognitive systems pertinent to achievement motivation may be learned differentially by various racial and social class groupings" (Bar-Tal 1979). Although it is not yet conclusive, the research suggests that in educational settings both blacks and females may perform below their abilities because of attributional patterns that differ from those of most white males. Further research is necessary to determine whether or not this is true of job training situations as well. If so, change is necessary to equalize the opportunities for populations which are traditionally excluded from upper-level management positions. For too long these groups have been "waiting in the wings." Now that they have gained access to the stage, it is time that they have the opportunity for the "better parts" as well.

Fitting into a Job

Cultural transmission in the work setting is an active, negotiated process that seems to be most smoothly accomplished when the novice is easily assimilated into a work crew whose interactions are governed by a code of cooperation and flexibility in accomplishing the task at hand. In other words, the labor process and the pace of work that governs it substantially shape the new workers's accomodation to the work setting.

Management culture is important in this process but only because the way that it is characterized by the new worker appears to play an important role in the "success" or "failure" of the new worker in accomodating to the job. At best, management culture through the role taken by the new worker's supervisors is perceived to be actively supportive. At work, it may be seen as hostile, inflexible, rejecting, and enigmatic.

Certain organizational settings appear to be less likely to provide benign work climates than others. The findings of the Adolescent Worker Study suggest that these are likely to be banks and other large institutions where routine mental labor is carried out by young, entry-level workers, usually females, in accomplishing such tasks as filing, checking monthly statements, and the like. There appears to be a high level of mistrust in these settings. In the cases of clerical workers in the study, relationships became so badly eroded by mistrust that each quit her job. The regulation and control of work tasks by computerized systems in such settings limit and control worker independence and autonomy, rather than expanding the job by increasing task variety and enhancing decision-making opportunities. According to management experts, organizations such as banks and insurance firms are "trying to join the new electronic technologies with the old style of rigidly hierarchical management and tightly circumscribed jobs." As computers are introduced, remaining jobs

tend to be redefined to require less training or skill (New York Times, 30 September 1984).

In contrast, some settings, such as the appliance repair shop and the fastener factory, promote the relatively easy integration of most new workers, usually males, into the job. To be sure, some workers are not successful in their accomodation to small business and repair shop settings because their personal values and background experience undermine relationships with co-workers and supervisors from the very beginning of their employment. Oftentimes new workers are not buffered by having well-established relatives working in the organization. On the whole, small businesses, repair shops, and factory settings provide far more autonomy in carrying out job-related tasks since tasks are less alienated than the mental work done by clerical workers in banks and other offices. Workers in the shop and factory settings are well aware of their locations in the flow of production. In the bank, clerical workers have little control over their jobs. They are subject to the monthly cycle of business and personal account activity. In addition, they are often burdened by the unpredictable and intrusive nature of computers that function to both regulate and control the work.

In both the shop and factory settings, workers are explicitly told to organize their tasks in a manner harmonious with the individual worker's skills and predilections. Interactions between workers and supervisors occur on a daily basis, and co-worker interactions are virtually continuous despite the deafening noise from machines and equipment. By contrast, the bank's organizational arrangements create a gap between supervisors and workers and the jobs themselves are inflexibly dependent upon schedules and designs completely out of the worker's control.

So long as employers in their capacity as supervisors remain aloof from new young workers, and especially when their distance is stretched further by technologically innovative machinery, young workers will feel threatened and alienated. There seems to be the sentiment abroad among supervisors that young, part-time workers are highly expendable. Few employers will actually express these sentiments directly. However, policies governing hourly wages, breaktimes and informal conversation on the job, as well as expectations for near-perfect performance, seem most heavily calculated to promote the failure of young, female office workers in particular.

Authority Relations in Adolescent Workplaces

The inescapable nature of authority relations in adolescent workplaces demands that young workers develop some recognition of the rhetoric of rules and practices that operate in these settings. Even in those contexts where managers are unable to enforce their workplace standards, managers attempt to construct an image of the ubiquity of supervision. Managers utilize varied approaches to supervision: charisma, coercion, and reason. These variations do not seem directly related to differences in work settings, but are contingent upon individual differences in the context of situationally specific interaction. The three superordinates in Roy's mail room, for instance, used quite dissimilar strategies in overseeing their workers. The location of the mailroom in the complex organization of a financial institution would suggest the logic of a rational-legal approach to authority. Yet, the managers were

not predisposed to use this approach, developing coercive and charismatic means just as readily. The rational-legal approach was uniformily most effective with the young workers because they had not initially been told the reasons behind the rules they were expected to respect. In another setting, the coin and stamp store, the manager eventually decided to become more coercive with his young employee because he was not obtaining the results he wanted through reason or persuasion.

It is also apparent that authority relations are changeable. Youth adjust to rules and practices either through greater compliance or through greater resistance, both of which hamper spontaneity. Managers, too, make adjustments, but with the intention of increasing cooperation among young employees. There is little evidence of negotiation between young workers and managers that results in relaxed standards or increased flexibility. The numerous instances of termination, which managers attributed to young workers' failure to respect the rules and comply with practices, affirm the strength of managerial authority in workplaces.

Simmel's phrase "societas leonina" aptly describes the unbalanced relationsip between young workers and their bosses. Structural supports, affording managers far greater power, buttress this imbalance. The labor market opportunity structure for young workers is limited--with most jobs available in the secondary market (e.g., health spas, fast food restaurants, and so on) and positioned at the entry level. Additionally, unemployment rates for the young are substantially higher than the rates for older age groups, especially among nonwhite youth. If these structural factors are coupled with a negative social-psychological predisposition on the part of employers to expect an inadequate performance from young workers, the plight of young workers is increased. Since managers are especially wary about their young employees' respect for authority and since market opportunity structures are limited, young workers have but a narrow margin for resistance or insubordination in workplaces. Given their lack of experience, insubordination is frequently an artifact of their general workplace ignorance.

The enactment and recognition of authority is best understood as a set of voluntary and intentional social actions: young people must purposefully comply to managerial directions in order for authority structures to be upheld and for business as usual to move forward. In view of the purposeful quality of authority relations, it seems that schools should be able to help prepare young people for the authority relations they will face in workplaces. However, this expectation from schools--that they serve as agents in easing the transition from school to work--has its proponents and its adversaries.

The most vocal group of proponents of the view that schools should take an active role in preparing young people for work is the vocational education community. Since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, the vocational curriculum track has been part of American public education. Originally, vocational education supported programs in the occupational areas of trade and industry, agriculture, and home economics to correspond to the work force needs of businesses and industries in the early part of the century. Reforms have been concerned with instruction in career awareness and development, job search skills, and, most recently, vocational ethics. It is this last area, vocational ethics, that relates to authority relations. Curricular material, including both books and computerized modules, instruct students in learning normative

rules of working and in gaining a respect for superordinates. Students get high grades when they master the "proper" attitudes toward work as follows: reporting for work on time and when scheduled; following directions; sharing problems with supervisors; being careful with a company's property; and telling the truth.

The 1980s have witnessed a proliferation of partnerships between business and education that further develop ways that schools can prepare young people for work. A typical part of these programs is a concern for introducing students "to the performance and attitudinal requirements of the workplace" Spring, forthcoming). Some analysts are concerned about the close relationship between education and business to the extent that students learn the specific interests of business and industry at the expense of a broader understanding of social, political, and economic pro-cesses. Joel Spring, for instance, describes this dilemma as follows:

> Employers might be happy with the schools determining whether or not a person is a compliant worker, but it does not forbode much good for the quality of our future society if this becomes a major goal of socialization within the public schools. A society of people with proper attitudinal requirements for the workplace might be one that has lost its inventive and dynamic qualities (forthcoming).

Additionally, the target student group of many of the recent job development partnerships are central city youth who are predominantly from lower-income groups and are nonwhite. A limited educational emphasis with respect to skill learning in these job development programs may result in improved adaptability to workplaces among program participants, but may also lead to restricted capabilities of movement beyond entry-level employment.

Schools also have informal ways of conveying authority relations to students. As do all complex organizations, school systems design their own internal opportunity structure and sanctions that operate within the system. This opportunity structure is the curricular tracking system. Critics of curriculum tracking point out that an indirect consequence of this system is the construction of a hidden curriculum or paracurriculum of schooling. This paracurriculum places a greater emphasis on obedience to rules and respect for the authority of office among the nonacademic tracks than is the case in academic, college preparatory classes. Since curricular tracks may correspond closely to the socioeconomic status of students, in effect, obedience may be emphasized among students from lower economic classes who will be assuming a subordinate role with limited "career" options in workplaces at an earlier point in their lives than their college-bound schoolmates in the upper academic tracks.

Whether one examines the workplace-related formal curriculum or similar informal curricular programs in schools, there are some notable differences in people's experiences associated with socioeconomic variables. Certainly, schools alone cannot be expected to remedy inequality in society, but neither are they expected to perpetuate or intensify inquality. How then can schools help students become better equipped for dealing with authority relations in workplaces without simultaneously teaching students to be docile, compliant, and unquestioning?

One constructive suggestion has been recently proposed by Corwin (forthcoming). It is Corwin's thesis that work-skill levels in workplaces may have become technically downgraded in some jobs, but that organizational skills have become increasingly difficult to master. By organizational skills Corwin means such abilities as understanding how organizations work, how authority is implemented, and how and why rules are administered. A sufficient body of generalized knowledge about organizational structures and processes has been developed and can be incorporated into the curriculum of secondary schools. Ironically, this body of knowledge is a standard part of the specialized training of managers. The exposure of students to a body of systematic knowledge about organizations would provide a basis for their better-informed participation in authority relations in workplaces.

The young clerk in the coin and stamp shop commented that high school had been a "game" to him but that his workplace was "a lot different." Once this new entrant to the labor force becomes more familiar with the actors at work, the rules--both formal and informal, how divisions relate to the organization as a whole, and how decisions are made--he may change his view. Meanwhile, this young worker must on his own attempt to determine how to please his boss while he maintains his personal integrity.

Training in the Adolescent Work Sites

Training in adolescent work sites can range from systematic task episodes with the essential characteristics for learning in nonclassroom settings to informal experiences that hardly resemble training at all. Large companies appear to provide the most comprehensive and formal training programs for youth entering positions within the company that require an extensive knowledge of a cognitive area. However, large corporations do not provide systematic training programs for youth entering low-skilled jobs such as mailroom deliverer. Such employees are typically provided an orientation to the corporation during which evaluation, pay raises, and promotional structures are explained, but job-task-related information is not provided.

Not all large corporations provide systematic and supportive training programs, however. One new hire employed at a large financial institution did not receive an orientation to the organization nor a systematic training program. In fact, this employee did not experience a supportive work environment at any point following her employment and left the job site after 7 months.

Some corporations do, indeed, invest more time and money in training. With this investment in their new hires, management promotes an environment conducive to the development and formation of loyalty among new workers. Observers witnessed bonding occurring among managers, workers, and co-workers at work sites that provided more systematic training opportunities for new hires than in those settings that had not. New hires who work in training-rich job environments are more likely to stay on the job than new hires who work in job settings without systematic training programs and supportive work environments.

Most youth do not obtain jobs at corporations that provide a systematic and supportive training program. Most work in small businesses or in establishments that employ less than 20 workers per work site during any given

shift. Training in these settings is more informal and varied. Smaller establishments use informal training by management more frequently. Smaller establishments typically pay lower wages as well. Job-hopping, also occurred more frequently in smaller establishments. This may be due to the more rigorous screening process larger corporations follow in hiring new employees. However, the major factor in the high turnover rate among adolescent workers appears to be the lack of a systematic and supportive training environment for youth with-in the worksite. Youth move from a school environment that shapes students to respond to formal authority figures through frequent feedback and evaluation, such as comments and grades (Sieber 1979) to a work environment where evalua-tion infrequently occurs. The evaluation process within the adolescent work-site is sporadic at best.

Since smaller establishments have more informal training and evaluation proceedings, success on the job in these settings depends more upon a combination of personality and skills than on formal standards such as attendance and punctuality, knowledge of work tasks, quantity of work, and the like. Managers in these businesses are free to hire and fire youth based on the managers' own needs and personal preferences. Several cases reported here point this out clearly. For example, John, an employee at a roller rink, was fired for calling in sick on a rainy Monday morning. The manager assumed that John didn't want to ride the bus in the rain; within 2 days after John called in sick, he was replaced. In contrast, a second youth employed in a health spa negotiated an extended leave of absence from his job setting. Terry had excellent skills due to his interests in body building and was a valued employee from the perspective of both the clientele and management. Terry had an outgoing personality and got along very well with his manager, Mark.

Young workers in smaller establishments do not have clearly defined duties. During one work site observation, the observer saw a receptionist greeting customers and answering the phones. During the second observation, the observer saw the receptionist mopping the floor and cleaning the restrooms. Many young workers complain that they never know what to expect and dislike these variations in their job. Managers who provide youth with a clear set of duties to ensure that youth know exactly what is expected help to foster success on the job. Through clearer job descriptions and more systematic training and evaluation procedures, managers at work sites that predominately recruit within the youth labor market might minimize the chance of getting caught in the hiring-firing cycle.

It is probably the case that many youth entering the labor market do not receive sufficient performance evaluations. What does constitute a satisfactory, employee performance evaluation system? Landy and associates (1978) found that the evaluation process is central to many personnel decisions. The like-lihood of goal acceptance on the part of the worker depends to some degree on the individual's current perception of the fairness of the system used to assess the current levels of performance. Mount (1983) agrees that performance evaluations are considered fair and accurate if they are characterized by the following:

shift. Training in these settings is more informal and varied. Smaller establishments use informal training by management more frequently. Smaller establishments typically pay lower wages as well. Job-hopping, also occurred more frequently in smaller establishments. This may be due to the more rigorous screening process larger corporations follow in hiring new employees. However, the major factor in the high turnover rate among adolescent workers appears to be the lack of a systematic and supportive training environment for youth with-in the worksite. Youth move from a school environment that shapes students to respond to formal authority figures through frequent feedback and evaluation, such as comments and grades (Sieber 1979) to a work environment where evalua-tion infrequently occurs. The evaluation process within the adolescent work-site is sporadic at best.

Since smaller establishments have more informal training and evaluation proceedings, success on the job in these settings depends more upon a combination of personality and skills than on formal standards such as attendance and punctuality, knowledge of work tasks, quantity of work, and the like. Managers in these businesses are free to hire and fire youth based on the managers' own needs and personal preferences. Several cases reported here point this out clearly. For example, John, an employee at a roller rink, was fired for calling in sick on a rainy Monday morning. The manager assumed that John didn't want to ride the bus in the rain; within 2 days after John called in sick, he was replaced. In contrast, a second youth employed in a health spa negotiated an extended leave of absence from his job setting. Terry had excellent skills due to his interests in body building and was a valued employee from the perspective of both the clientele and management. Terry had an outgoing personality and got along very well with his manager, Mark.

Young workers in smaller establishments do not have clearly defined duties. During one work site observation, the observer saw a receptionist greeting customers and answering the phones. During the second observation, the observer saw the receptionist mopping the floor and cleaning the restrooms. Many young workers complain that they never know what to expect and dislike these variations in their job. Managers who provide youth with a clear set of duties to ensure that youth know exactly what is expected help to foster success on the job. Through clearer job descriptions and more systematic training and evaluation procedures, managers at work sites that predominately recruit within the youth labor market might minimize the chance of getting caught in the hiring-firing cycle.

It is probably the case that many youth entering the labor market do not receive sufficient performance evaluations. What does constitute a satisfactory, employee performance evaluation system? Landy and associates (1978) found that the evaluation process is central to many personnel decisions. The like-lihood of goal acceptance on the part of the worker depends to some degree on the individual's current perception of the fairness of the system used to assess the current levels of performance. Mount (1983) agrees that performance evaluations are considered fair and accurate if they are characterized by the following:

- Frequency
- Familiarity on the part of the evaluator with the performance level of the person being evaluated
- Agreement between the evaluator and the employee on specific job duties assigned to the employee
- A cooperatively designed plan to help the subordinate eliminate perceived job-related weaknesses

As youth move from schools to work, they need to become more assertive in asking key questions--What is expected of me?, and How am I measuring up? As students, they continually have had course requirements and grading procedures clearly spelled out to them. Now, as workers, they frequently do not know how they are being evaluated. New hires from the youth labor market are not provided sufficient feedback on their performance. It is clear that a major portion of training in adolescent worksites was completed by the new hire's co-workers. The new hires themselves reported that a co-worker's contributions to their training was most important when compared to the efforts of others. Co-workers did, indeed, have a very important role in acclimating the new hire to the work site. Yet, many youth enter the work site from school environments which do not encourage team-learning situations. This is the case because most school settings emphasize competition and individual achievement. Educators need to prepare youth for the school-to-work transition. By encouraging more team learning opportunities and modeling a realistic business environment in their classrooms, educators can make a contribution to easing the school-to-work transition for the young work force.

Employers need to spell out the exact job duties of a position and the evaluation criteria used to evaluate a new employee at the time the new employee is hired. A thorough orientation and frequent feedback sessions need to be provided for the adolescent worker if a successful employment period is expected.

Quits and Firings among Adolescent Workers

Factors contributing to quits and firings occurring among young workers are complex and varied. The points of view of both employer and the young worker are often at odds with respect to performance expectations, commitment to the work organization, and long-range prospects. These conflicting perspectives indicate that very often a less than complete organizational socialization occurs to align new employees with the norms of their workplaces. However, variance in expectations between employers adolescent workers also occurs in situations that do not result in job-leaving or termination. In some cases, employers take greater care in orienting their new employees, and in other cases, these conflicting perspectives simply do not become problematic.

Job changes among adults can be understood by paying specific attention to the experiences of youth inside workplaces. Past research has focused on wages, motivations, and employers' attitudes, without due consideration of the ways that young people are initiated into workplaces. This neglects a very important issue. After examining a central act in career development, that of

leaving jobs--we can conclude that considerable confusion surrounds job passages involving young workers. Misperceptions from the point of view of the employer and young worker impede young people's legitimate acceptance in the work force. Just as is the case with other organized activities, more deliberate attempts on the part of employers to create oppportunities for young people would likely alter the current image of young workers as unstable and unmotivated employees.

In summary, the case studies of youth in work settings reported here provide an anthology of the meaning of work for adolescents employed in organizationally and technologically diverse work settings. The research has uncovered the nature of workplace processes affecting all young workers' job experience and future mobility, namely, finding a job, combating negative attributions, fitting into a job, receiving training, negotiating authority, and quitting or losing a job. Although it is difficult to generalize from the report, the research has indicated that account of the transition to work by out-of-school, noncollege-educated youth must consider at least these processes. All young people entering jobs can benefit by understanding that these six dimensions of job-related experiences are likely to become issues at some point in their work lives.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: BECOMING A WORKER

by

Kathryn M. Borman

Young, out-of-school workers are this nation's most mobile work force participants. In fact, most unemployed 16 to 20-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and who subsequently locate jobs remain in their new positions less than 6 months (Borus 1982). This employment pattern has frequently been identified as a social problem attributable to characteristics of young workers. Vocational immaturity, inadequate preparation for the work force, and poor attitudes toward work usually are cited to "explain" this pattern. In contrast, the problems associated with youth entering the world of work should be considered as primarily structural in origin. Rather than pointing to the inadequacies of youth, the emphasis should be on those economic and social constraints that shape the experiences of young workers in the labor market.

Recent research has challenged the assumption that youth are primarily at fault for their apparent failure to locate and hold jobs. One important investigation that considers both sociology and economics, has attempted to delineate youth's values, personality development, and labor market experiences to the constraints and opportunities of youth labor market structures. This research is best exemplified in the longitudinal studies by Michael Borus (1982) and his colleagues in the National Longitudinal Survey. In this research, the effects of region, residence in a metropolitan versus a rural setting, and other extrinsic factors, including shifting labor market opportunities, have been examined in connection with different individuals as they moved from school to work (ibid.). Findings from this research indicate group variations in job finding and job holding patterns. Thus, the challenge of locating a job, getting hired, and keeping a job take on different dimensions for young people. In contrast to young men, for example, young women seeking jobs frequently have child care issues to resolve; young black men seeking work often encounter a hostile institutional reception from employers; but white males are more likely to have personal contacts to smooth their way (ibid.).

To provide a broad-based understanding of the labor market experiences of youth, the focus of the Adolescent Worker Study is directed on such questions as the following:

- What jobs are available to youth looking for work?
- Who gets jobs?
- Who gets paid better wages?
- How do labor market shifts affect youth?
- From the perspective of youth, what are the reasons for taking jobs?
- What job search activities are most frequently used by youth?
- Once on the job, what expectations do youth hold for their future work-related activities?
- How do young workers "fit into" jobs?
- What happens if they don't?

In the final analysis, the transition from school to work involves youth in a series of job-shopping, job-holding, and job-leaving experiences. This allows most youth to gain increasing sophistication about the world of work, although it creates considerable stress. This stress could be minimized by creating an awareness among employers of the importance of erecting "bridge" or transitional jobs for high school drop-outs and graduates. This point will be explored in the final chapter of this report.

Once employed, young job-holders are constrained by structural features of the job setting itself. These include the amount of time allocated by employers for training and supervision and frequently unattractive and cognitively circumscribed characteristics of tasks. The nature of these job-specific experiences is the second focus of the field-based research reported in subsequent chapters. This research, in large part, follows on previous work investigating the effects of part-time employment on adolescent attitudes, values, and orientation to school and to work. Greenberger, Steinberg, and Raggiero (1982) concluded that most young workers in their first part-time jobs experienced little rudimentary training and supervision and much less mentoring from

adults on the job. Moreover, these same investigators noted that the jobs themselves provided highly limited opportunities for learning social skills.

Not all work situations are narrow and constraining, however. When jobs are monitored closely by a supervisor or co-worker and when training is afforded to young workers, tasks may be more challenging, and skill learning on the job may be enhanced. David Moore's (forthcoming) study of young interns in field-based, work-study job placements reveals that these interns typically experienced a growing understanding of task demands, programmatic features of the work environment, and task-processing skill requirements of their jobs. By constructing what Moore terms "cognitive scaffolding," young workers gradually become aware of linkages and relationships among these job characteristics. Significantly, this awareness is enhanced by the careful, conscious structuring of job learning by experienced colleagues and trainers of youth.

In assembling a view of job-finding, job-holding, and job-leaving experiences of youth, our interest centers on such questions as, What performance and cognitive processing demands are inherent in job tasks performed by youth? How are job training and task monitoring carried out by co-workers, supervisors, and others in the workplace? From the perspective of youth, what factors contribute to job leaving? How do youths' perceptions of factors related to job leaving compare with those of their supervisors? If youth do get fixed in a job, how do training and informal relations (or other factors) contribute to this process? These questions in addition to those raised earlier in connection with the labor market experiences of youth, are the focus of in this report.

Before we can have a detailed picture of the processes involved in becoming a worker, we must understand variations that characterize the day-to-day encounters and interactions of youth seeking and holding jobs. Although we may view the transition to work in this manner, our perspective will be incomplete if we do not acknowledge that all young people between 16 and 20 who are out of school and looking for work face a hostile reception in the workplace primarily because they are young. Before discussing the youth labor market opportunity structure, we will examine the assumptions guiding the analysis in this chapter and in the report.

Background Assumptions

After reviewing major findings of the Holland Report, a study of British employer's attitudes toward young and older "prime working age employees," Robert Moore (1983) concluded that the preference expressed by employers for more experienced workers does not refer to "intrinsic personality characteristics developed by some specialized socializing agency but to life cycle characteristics. The difference between the young worker and the 'ideal worker' reflects their different social situations, responsibilities, and commitments . . . [as perceived by their employers]" (R. Moore in Gleeson 1983, emphasis added).

Employers of manual workers described their "ideal employee" as a 30-year-old, married man with a family. This employee maintained good relations with co-workers, and his educational and work record indicated stability and reliability rather than cleverness, creativity, or even a high level of job-related, motor-skill proficiency. Moore argues that employer preferences for the stable, older male scale down employment opportunities for younger workers, especially during hard economic times, and constrict the opportunity structure of jobs available to young, uninitiated workers.

We see the opportunity structure that governs youth employment possibilities as more appropriate for the process of becoming a worker rather than for obtaining "job-related skills," "career development," and so on. These latter concepts have been stressed in labor market entry analysis from the perspectives of social and behavioral scientists and career counselors. A linkage is assumed between skills taught in education and training programs and "appropriate sectors of the occupational system" (R. Moore 1983). Further, we assume that young people who are "mature" and "well-integrated" in their occupational interests and choices will see clear, obvious steps along a career path. This path begins with an entry-level position and proceeds logically to an "advanced" position. We can summarize this perspective as the rational choice model of youth's job selection.

The Limitations of the Rational Choice Model

The rational choice model seems bankrupt for several reasons. First, the actual experiences of youth entering the labor market from high school suggest a far more market-regulated picture of job entry (see Mortimer and Finch; Hotchkiss, forthcoming). Second, a very poor connection apparently exists between skills taught in school and skills required in day-to-day problem-solving activities on the job. This mismatch limits the utility of a "talent matching" strategy for job-seeking youth (see Lave; Jacob, forthcoming). Moreover, it appears that employers value proper attitude, stability, and so on more than job-related skills in their workers (R. Moore, 1983; Spring forthcoming; Corwin forthcoming; Neubauer, forthcoming). Because our society is biased about the job performance capabilities and personal skills of young, minority workers, the relevance of school-work skill linkages and career maturation are particulary questionable for these young people, who from the perspective of employers, are "high risk" employers (Kornblum and Williams; Ogbu, forthcoming).

Third, employers of young workers hire and retrain employees according to principles governing the constriction and expansion of the opportunity structure. Given their preference for older, established workers, employers are likely to see some youths' recent and perhaps more thorough education and training for specific jobs as simply increasing competition among young certified workers who, nonetheless, remain less attractive, especially during hard economic times. Finally, the notion of career development assumes that all related occupations are arranged on a career ladder that, will ultimately lead to a predictable occupation--that generally requires one to do paper work at a desk, and be removed from the demands of physical labor. The idea of career development tied to career mobility within a particular business sector makes little sense to young workers, especially since they frequently move among occupations and industries, and often express distaste for "desk jobs," at least in the case of young, working-class males (Willis 1977).

The idea of a career ladder and occupational maturity are strongly embedded in the counseling psychology literature that typically has been focused on middle class concerns. These concepts are equally fixed in traditional

sociological analyses of youth and work and emphasize occupational and organizational socialization from the management side (Corwin; Wellman forthcoming.) A recent study of the effects of federally funded program participation on youth's attitudes and behaviors reveals these biases. Despite her general sensitivity to the perspective of Comprehensive Employment and Training program youth participants she interviewed, Bonnie Snedeker wonders about the reluctance of many young workers to think about vocational preferences, career ladders, and so on (Snedeker 1982). One of her respondents states:

> I just want a job, you know? They told me this was a program to get you work experience, you know, give you an income, some kind of training and maybe finish school and all. I just listened to all that. They said a bunch of things and I listened to 'em but I didn't really think much about it. My main objective was to get a job.

Snedeker laments, "like many of the young people I interviewed, they were thinking in terms of a job rather than a career." She does not consider the utility to youth of viewing the marketplace as a locus to test talents, spend time, or use to achieve such specific noncareer-related ends as buying a car.

It is difficult to dispute that lack of direction and "occupational identity" during the adolescent period, but we find that the attitude expressed by Snedeker and others towards youths' "immature" approach to work reveals a lack of understanding of the processes experienced by youth in becoming workers. The assumption has been that young people, especially those who are low school achievers in general track courses, are poorly equipped for the challenges of job-seeking and career development. Young people who change jobs, who do not see themselves on career ladders, and who avoid program and agency help, are perceived as deficient in "coping skills."

Youth Job-related "Deficiencies" and Policy

One likely policy outcome, given a perception of youth employment deficits, is a program of training and education that would result in the most narrowly technocratic curriculum imaginable. In this connection, which is not unlikely given the current federal emphasis on business rather than the youth needs. Robert Moore (1983) has written a chilling image of curriculum designed to instill work-related competencies, attitudes and values in the young:

> In combination, the deficit model and maturation theory open up a space in the curriculum for social and life skills training which comes under the heading of 'acquisition of basic skills.' These provide a checklist against which young people can be compared and form the bases for a negotiated personal program and contract. The aim of the program is to develop the trainee's sense of 'realism,' match talents to jobs, and optimize 'employability.' This is achieved by training the young person to 'cope' with a plethora of detail -- clocking on, looking up addresses, using telephones, filling in forms, etc. Social and life skills training has the same relation to life that painting by numbers has to art (p. 20).

The social and life skills curriculum that Moore describes is implicit in many current programs linking industrial needs with school programs (see both Neubauer; Spring forthcoming). These curricula assume that youth can be molded and socialized for life in the workplace in a manner that allows them passively to put aside their own backgrounds and future orientations.

An emergent job development program designed to meet business needs in the United States in the 1980s, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), was incorporated to create partnerships between agencies in the public sector and businesses in the private sector. JAGs across the nation are funded by local government units, primarily at the city level. The JAG program places the burden of employability on the shoulders of youth. Four major areas of deficiency in young people are cited: (1) education, (2) experience, (3) knowledge of the job market, and (4) motivation. The program is structured to address these problem areas by providing career counseling and field trip activities sponsored by local leading businesses. Although program materials do not explictly say so, the primary target group is central city minority youth who are enrolled in general track programs. The areas of deficiency acknowledged as the wellspring of youth's subsequent problems in the labor market are identifying, securing, and keeping a job (see "Jobs for America's Graduates, n.d.).

The basic underlying assumption of the program is that if only these teenagers had learned more (education), had better skills and attitudes (experience), sought a better occupational match (knowledge of the job market), and showed a willingness to work (motivation), they more readily would locate and hold jobs. Youth are responsible for their limited experience and lack of negotiating the opportunity structure, but there is also an assumption that

business organizations have uniform expectations for employees. Variations among youth (e.g., race, gender, social class) and among organizations and job demands are ignored. The process of becoming a worker in the JAG program is reduced to achieving a uniform orientation to work for all youth, regardless of their individual backgrounds and job interests, through a "curriculum" designed to correct the deficits of inadequate preparation.

The Limits to Rational Choice and "Voluntarism"

More realistic are the studies of Willis (1977), McRobbie (1978), and Valli (1982) who argue that "cultural orientations" should inform analyses the process of becoming a worker. "Cultural orientations" as a concept "implies involvement by individuals and groups in the ongoing creation of their own identities in a way that is neither mechanistic nor wholly voluntaristic, but is rooted in their social and economic pasts and in their perceived futures" (Valli 1982). In other words, we would expect some variation in youths' early work experiences dependent upon such background features as parents' income and occupations, race and gender, educational and personal orientations, job plans, values, desire for further education, and other psychosocial dimensions such as self-esteem and competitiveness. Moreover, we would also expect different outcomes from job seeking and job holding, given facts about a particular group of young workers. Each person struggles with current life conditions, is constrained by opportunities available in the current labor market, but eventually shapes a particular path. It is to these conditions that we turn next.

The Labor Market Opportunity Structure

In considering work opportunities for youth, one must examine the occupations and industries in which they work, and their relative earning power. Opportunities dependent on region and residence in rural as opposed to metropolitan areas, so these factors must also be considered as effects on youth employment.

In this section, work patterns will be reviewed using data on working youth assembled in the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) of a representative national sample of 32,870,000 noninstitutionalized youth. This sample included 12,686 young people born between 1957-1964 and between 14 and 21 at

the time of their interviews. These youth varied in income status, race or ethnicity, and other characteristics. For example, "about 2,550,000 youth in the cohort were high school dropouts; at least 1,870,000 live in families whose income is below the poverty line; 1,630,000 have a health limitation that prevents them from working or limits the kind or amount of work they can do; and 2,270,000 of those aged 16 and older are unemployed" (Borus 1982).

I also will use information from a field study of labor market entry by 25 workers, age 17 to 21-year olds, who participated in The Adolescent Worker Study recently completed by myself with Jane Reisman, Margaretha Vreeburg Izzo, and others. This 12-month study, supported by the National Institute of Education, was done in Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio. It examines the experiences over time of youth in these two specific midwestern labor markets. Throughout the research, by means of interviews and worksite observations, the investigators chronicled the specific strategies youth used to find jobs, settle in, and change jobs. We also documented specific methods of training and work site "socialization." Of particular interest is the opportunity structure in the two research labor markets.

Characteristics of the Youth Labor Market

Although youth employment problems originate in the economy and are sensitive to employment rates, youth traditionally have held jobs less attractive to older workers. Since 1950, several changes in the occupational structure of youth jobs have occurred since 1950.

One of the most important of these shifts has been the decline in the number of youth employed as farm laborers. This is primarily due to increased mechanization and consolidation of individually operated farms. Between 1950 and 1970 the group most affected by this trend was black males, particularly those in the rural South. A strong and persistent effect of this decline is the lack of growth in low-skill, nonagricultural work that might have substituted for lost farm jobs (see Kornblum and Williams forthcoming). The second important change since 1950 is the decline in the proportion of nonwhite, female youth employed as private household workers. This trend has been partially compensated by an increase in clerical occupations.

Although the discussion will focus on out-of-school youth, it is informative to compare their employment profiles with those of their peers who are either still in high school or attending college. Table 1 shows these comparisons with data for total youth employment at the time of the 1979 NLS research. These figures reveal the opportunity structure is constricted or expanded for high school dropouts, high school graduates, and students enrolled in high school or college. Clearly, being a member of a racial or gender minority group further contributes to the liklihood of employment in one or another occupation:

> Occupational distributions show distinct differences by sex and race in a number of cases. Among dropouts, minority females are more likely to be working as operatives or as farm laborers and less likely to be employed as service workers than are white males. Racial differences are evident among female high school workers: 9 percent of blacks compared with 15 percent of Hispanics and 28 percent of whites. (Shapiro 1982).

Relative to the remaining work force, youth have reduced opportunities in certain occupations, specifically in higher-level white collar jobs as professional and technical workers, managers, and administrators and in highly skilled manual or craft jobs. On the other hand, youth have expanded opportunities as low-skilled laborers, service workers, and private household workers. Thus, considering the labor market as a whole, youth typically are offered opportunities in jobs with low-skill requirements, highly limited career paths, and low prestige or status. As technology advances and skill demands in higher-level jobs increase, we are likely to see a widening gap between job opportunities for youth at the low status and high status ends of the job spectrum. Historical evidence supports this. Joseph Kett notes that during a similar period of techonolgical advancement, the introduction of high speed machinery into industrial production in the late 19th and early 20th centuries created a demand for skilled adult labor rather than youth labor:

> Industrialization led employers to seek cheap labor, but adult immigrants rather than teenagers were the preferred source, for boys were too unsteady in their habits, too prone to switch jobs, get into fights, and grant themselves holidays (Kett 1977).

Despite variation by region, place of residence, birth cohort, similar difficulties in gaining access to jobs have always beset youth and are likely to continue.

TABLE 1
OCCUPATION, BY SEX AND SCHOOL-ENROLLMENT STATUS
(PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS)

Occupation	High-School Dropouts		High-School Students		College Students		Nonenrolled High-School Graduates		Total		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Professional, technical	1	1	2	2	7	11	6	4	4	4	4
Managers, administrators	1	2	1	1	3	4	4	5	2	3	3
Sales	4	2	9	12	8	9	9	3	9	7	8
Clerical	15	2	23	6	43	16	46	7	35	7	20
Craft	3	19	1	5	1	11	2	23	1	14	8
Operatives (except Transportation)	27	25	2	8	4	7	10	21	7	15	11
Transportation operatives	1	8	1	3	0	1	0	8	0	5	3
Laborers (nonfarm)	5	23	2	25	3	13	2	16	3	20	12
Farmers	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farm laborers	2	4	1	7	0	1	0	3	1	5	3
Service workers	28	14	32	30	29	27	21	10	27	20	23
Private-household workers	13	1	26	1	3	1	2	0	11	1	6
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Universe: Civilians aged 14-21 on January 1, 1979 who were employed on the interview date (N = 16,222,000).
Source: David Shapiro, "Working Youth in Tomorrow's Workers ed. Michael E. Borous Lexington: D.C. Heath 1982 Table 2-1 p. 24

Occupations, Industrial Sectors and Wages

Of course, for some youth opportunities are more contracted than for others. Indeed, as is clear in Table 1, high school dropouts are faced with fewer opportunities, particularly if want to achieve occupational status as high- and middle-level, white collar workers or high-level blue collar workers.

Another way to examine the opportunity structure is to consider the distribution of youth workers in various industrial sectors as shown in Table 2. Overall, approximately 40 percent of working youth are employed in the service sector with most of this group engaged in retail sales, including food service. Similar differences in the location of young workers in various industries are present in Table 2 for occupational distribution. Young women, no matter what their school enrollment status, have restricted opportunities outside a limited number of industrial sectors. Most work in retail trades, restaurants, and fast food chains. Among female high school graduates, routine clerical work such as filing and checking documents in either finance, insurance, real estate or related businesses is typical of their opportunities.

Wages earned by employed persons reflect a large number of factors related to the individual worker's personal characteristics. The amount of schooling the individual has most affected wages, but age, race, and gender also have independent effects. However, a large number of external, structural effects also impact youth earnings. These include job-related characteristics such as the occupation itself, the industrial sector in which it is located, the extent of unionization, environmental effects such as season of the year, region, city size, and so on.

According to Shapiro's (1982) analysis of NLS data, there is a clear relationship between wages and school enrollment status. In addition, marketplace rewards are greatest for those with the strongest labor market attachment, at least as perceived by employers. High school graduates are more likely to be employed full-time than either high school dropouts or enrolled students. Although without school obligations, black female dropouts earn almost a full dollar less per hour than their credentialed peers. Moreover,

Occupations, Industrial Sectors and Wages

Of course, for some youth opportunities are more contracted than for others. Indeed, as is clear in Table 1, high school dropouts are faced with fewer opportunities, particularly if want to achieve occupational status as high- and middle-level, white collar workers or high-level blue collar workers.

Another way to examine the opportunity structure is to consider the distribution of youth workers in various industrial sectors as shown in Table 2. Overall, approximately 40 percent of working youth are employed in the service sector with most of this group engaged in retail sales, including food service. Similar differences in the location of young workers in various industries are present in Table 2 for occupational distribution. Young women, no matter what their school enrollment status, have restricted opportunities outside a limited number of industrial sectors. Most work in retail trades, restaurants, and fast food chains. Among female high school graduates, routine clerical work such as filing and checking documents in either finance, insurance, real estate or related businesses is typical of their opportunities.

Wages earned by employed persons reflect a large number of factors related to the individual worker's personal characteristics. The amount of schooling the individual has most affected wages, but age, race, and gender also have independent effects. However, a large number of external, structural effects also impact youth earnings. These include job-related characteristics such as the occupation itself, the industrial sector in which it is located, the extent of unionization, environmental effects such as season of the year, region, city size, and so on.

According to Shapiro's (1982) analysis of NLS data, there is a clear relationship between wages and school enrollment status. In addition, marketplace rewards are greatest for those with the strongest labor market attachment, at least as perceived by employers. High school graduates are more likely to be employed full-time than either high school dropouts or enrolled students. Although without school obligations, black female dropouts earn almost a full dollar less per hour than their credentialed peers. Moreover,

TABLE 2
INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT, BY SEX AND SCHOOL-ENROLLMENT STATUS
(PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS)

Industry	High-School Dropouts		High-School Students		College Students		Nonenrolled High-School Graduates		Total		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Agriculture, mining	4	9	2	9	2	1	2	7	2	7	5
Construction	2	17	1	3	0	3	1	13	1	8	5
Manufacturing, durables	11	20	1	3	2	9	8	23	5	13	9
Manufacturing, nondurables	17	7	4	11	5	5	8	8	7	8	8
Transportaion, communication	3	5	0	1	1	3	3	5	2	3	3
Wholesale trade	1	4	1	2	1	3	2	3	1	3	2
Retail trade, including restaurants	32	18	43	43	37	33	32	24	37	31	34
Finance, insurance, real estate	3	1	3	2	4	3	13	2	7	2	4
Business, repair services	2	10	2	6	1	8	3	7	2	7	5
Personal services	16	3	29	8	5	5	4	1	14	4	9
Entertainment, recreation services	0	1	2	4	2	4	1	1	2	3	3
Professional, related services	11	3	12	8	37	22	20	4	19	8	13
Public administration	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Universe: Civilians aged 14-21 on January 1, 1979 who were employed on the interview date (N = 16,222,000).
Source: David Shapiro, "Working Youth in Tomorrow's Workers ed. Michael E. Borous Lexington: D.C. Heath 1982 Table 2-2 p. 26

Scope of the Study

As youth leave high school and find jobs, they encounter experiences that allow them gradually to make reasoned choices about their futures. Unfortunately, for most this involves scaling down their dreams. For example, one young woman in the Adolescent Worker Study began her work in a major financial institution in downtown Cincinnati expressing career interest in law, architecture, and secretarial work.

Gradually, she became "realistic" about her options. After 9 months on the job during which she conducted small-scale, job-shopping forays into other financial and real estate sector businesses, she lowered her ambitions. She determined that given her limited resources, filing statements, and organizing returns to mail to customers would occupy her time for a while, although she still wanted a secretarial career. She contented herself with the fact that her job was "clean," unlike her mother's factory work, and that her income allowed her to be independent.

This young woman typifies thousands of young workers whose limited resources for education beyond high school force them to work after leaving school. Faced with limited choices, but frequently holding elaborate and lofty career ambitions, these young workers seek the most favorable employment circumstances. For most, their first jobs hold few intrinsic rewards. Thus, youth frequently become cynical about the workplace and often grow discouraged about their futures. Perhaps the most poignant aspect of the school to work transition is the deflation of dreams that occurs for so many.

The Adolescent Worker Study was designed to provide an in-depth analysis of the job experiences and related life histories of out-of-school working youth. Thus, the perspective taken on the topic of youth and work is situationally based, grounded in particular interactions between young workers and their immediate job-related experiences. The research plan was organized to allow a team of investigators to locate a number of worksites across a range of industrial sectors that were currently hiring young workers between the ages of 17 and 21. After we had gained access to these settings, the plan was to engage the participation of the next young person hired in each work site in the study. Chapter two of this report describes the problem of gaining access

and a description of the work settings and the 25 young workers who participated. The remaining chapters examine the issues that confront adolescent workers as they move into the workplace. To examine the unfolding patterns of their career and life histories during the period of observation, we have selected job-related problems that presented themselves to virtually every study participant. The remaining chapters examine these several problems by providing documentation from the 25 case studies assembled during the research.

The first problem encountered by the adolescent job seeker is locating a job. The strategies used by youth in finding work are examined in chapter three. Once the young person is hired, he or she faces the problem of establishing an identity as a competent worker. Often young workers are besieged with negative attributions by employers and co-workers whose values and perspectives on work are not shared by the new employee. The problem of negative attributions in the workplace is the subject of chapter four. Fitting into a job entails more than learning the skills required in coping with the technological demands of job-related tasks. Successfully integrating oneself into a job encompasses mastering a range of such social-learning tasks as when and if to take breaks. In other words, fitting into a job requires that young workers understand and manipulate the workplace culture. This cultural learning is the subject of chapter five. In chapter six, training in the workplace is examined by considering opportunities that are presented to young workers to learn the job with a trainer's supervision and coaching. Understanding and accomodating to authority in the workplace is the subject of chapter seven. Young workers face difficulties in negotiating authority structures in work settings because of their lack of experience in comparable settings and because employers seem predisposed to encounter insolence or indifference when they hire adolescent workers. Chapter eight examines the process and reasons for leaving a job and locating other work. Most of the young workers in our study changed jobs at least once. Finally, in chapter nine, the policy implications of this research are considered. Of particular importance are the recommendations for support and assistance to youth in making the transition from school to work and in viewing youth's workplace "difficulties" as fundamentally rooted in societal indifference.

REFERENCES

Borus, M.E. "Summary and Policy Implications." In Tomorrow's Workers, edited by M. E. Borus. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982.

Corwin, R. "Organizational Skills and the 'Deskilling' Hypothesis." Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

Greenberger, E. "The Effects of Unsupervised Work Experience and Some Broader Speculations Concerning the Role of Work in Adolescent Development." Paper presented at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Columbus, Ohio, September 15, 1983.

Greenberger, E.; Steinberg, L.; and Ruggiero, M. "A Job is a Job is a Job . . . Or Is It?" In Work and Occupations, 9 (February 1982): 79-86.

Hotchkiss, L. "Work and Schools--Complements or Competitors" In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

Jacob, E. "Literacy Skills and Production Line Work." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

"Jobs for America's Graduates". From Classrooms to Careers. Washington, DC: JAG.

Kett, S.F. Rites of Passage. New York: Basic, 1977.

Kornblum, W., and Williams. "Teenagers Working in Hard Times." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

Lave, J. "Experiments, Tests, Jobs and Chores: How We Learn What We Do." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

McRobbie, A. "Working Class Girls and the Culture of Feminity." In Women Take Issue: Aspects of Women's Subordination, edited by Women's Study Group, Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies. London: Hutchinson, 1978.

Moore, D. "Knowledge at Work: An Approach to Learning by Interns." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

Moore, R. "Further Education, Pedagogy and Production." In Youth Training and the Search for Work, edited by D. Gleeson. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.

Mortimer, J. and Finch, M. "The Effects of Part-time Work on Adolescent Self-Concept and Achievement." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

National Longitudinal Survey, 1982.

Neubauer, A. "Industry/Education Partnerships: Meeting the Needs of the 1980s." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

Ogbu, J. "Stockton, California Revisted: Joining the Workforce." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

Pfeffer, J. Power in Organizations. Marshfield, MA: Pitman, 1981.

Shapiro, D. "Working Youth." In Tomorrow's Workers, edited by M. E. Borus, pp. 23-58. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982.

Snedeker, B. Hard Knocks: Preparing Youth for Work. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1982.

Spring, "The Government and the Schools: The Battle over Youth in the Workplace." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

Valli, L. "Becoming Clerical Workers: The Relation between Office Education and Culture of Feminity." In Ideology and Education, edited by M. W. Apple and Lois Weis. Philadelphia: Temple University, 1982.

Wellman, D. "Learning at Work: The Etiquette of Longshoring." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood: Ablex, forthcoming.

Willis, P. Learning to Labor. Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS: GAINING ACCESS TO RESEARCH SETTINGS

by

Kathryn M. Borman and Jane Reisman

Introduction

Although the recent spate of school research employing observational and other methods of qualitative investigation suggests that these strategies no longer need justification for educational research (see Dobbert 1983; Goetz and LeCompte 1984; Bogdan and Biklen 1983), the connection between school and workplace-based research using these approaches has not been extensively discussed.

Qualitative studies of the processes of cultural indoctrination in subsistence and in emerging societies are present in some of the earliest research employing long-term observation of communities and groups. Most of these projects were done by anthropologists using traditional methods of ethnographic research. These investigators studied the social life of children as part of the whole fabric of community life. According to Goetz and LeCompte, these investigators focused on "the child's relationship with the family, patterns of informal learning and instruction, acquisition of roles and statuses, and a group's conceptualization of and prescriptions for appropriate development from infancy to adulthood" (Goetz and LeCompte 1984, pp. 18-19).

More recent studies in this tradition have been carried out by school-based researchers in a rather restricted set of educational contexts. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) argue that these investigations have occurred in "more arbitrary and less naturally bounded groups than had hitherto been customary in the community study tradition".

There are two major reasons why most of these analyses have been restricted to formal educational settings, namely, schools. First, most of the

---

Acknowledgements: The authors shared equally in writing this chapter. We would like to acknowledge the assistance of Jane Croy in preparing table 3.

research has been carried out in the United States, an industrialized society with a limited number of institutions charged with transmitting cultural knowledge to youth. Second, it is difficult in our privatized society for researchers to gain access to other agencies formally or informally charged with inculcating societal values in the young. In fact, there are a number of studies of childhood socialization and cultural indoctrination in the context of the family and peer group (see Heath 1983). However, there is little ethnographic research that provides an examination of the introduction of the young to the world culture of their society.

Approaches to the study of the effects of schooling have included at least five different foci for investigation: "career and life histories or role analyses of individuals; microethnographies of small work and leisure groups within classrooms or schools; studies of single classrooms abstracted as small societies; studies of school facilities or districts as discrete communities and . . . controlled comparisons . . . across a number of individuals" (Goetz and LeCompte 1984, p. 23). Although educational ethnographies vary as to the unit of analysis, they share a similar heritage in "focus, scope, and methods of execution" (ibid., p. 17). According to Goetz and LeCompte the following set of characteristics define educational ethnographies:

> The investigation of a small, relatively homogeneous and geographically located study site . . . ; long and repeated residence of the researcher at the site . . . ; use of participant observation as the preferred data collection strategy, supplemented with a variety of ancillary techniques . . . ; creation of a data base consisting primarily of field notes . . . ; and . . . a preoccupation with the interpretive description and explanation of the culture, life ways and social structure of the group under investigation.

The objective of the researcher is to create a comprehensive picture of the social setting. Of course, researchers have different interests; thus, two ethnographers might come away from the same setting with very different pictures. For example, a study of the effects of centralization on the role structure of the school system's administration and a study of the impact of a new curriculum on district students could occur simultaneously in the same

public school system and be carried out by two teams of researchers using similar methodologies; however, the ethnographies resulting from these two studies would be very different. A naive reader of the two studies probably would be unaware that both investigations occurred in the same district.

In the Adolescent Worker Study, the primary focus is on the job career and related life histories of the 25 young workers who were recruited at their worksites by the researchers in cooperation with their employers. A description of each of the participants is included later in this chapter. Discussion of research methods and issues is interspersed throughout the remaining chapters of this report with an emphasis on the specific aspects of the design and method that was obtained in the analysis presented in each chapter.

Impediments to Access

Gaining access to respondents is a common problem in setting up and conducting research. For survey research, the problem is one of response rate; for longitudinal research, the problem is one of attrition. For field researchers who need to conduct observations and become intimately involved, cooperation is necessary from participants and hosts.

A major influence on the design and execution of current field-based research persists from the work of sociologists present at the University of Chicago in the 1930s. These early investigators studied social phenomena in a large and, for the times, unusual range of settings, including the taxi dance hall, the school board meeting room, and the flophouse. Robert Park, a major figure in the Chicago school, instructed his students to, "Get your hands dirty with research" (Berger 1972, p. 38). For these field researchers and their successors, unobtrusive methods encouraged taking on roles, such as becoming a member of a focal community (see Liebow 1967; Lynd and Lynd 1939; Park and Burgess 1925; Thomas and Znaniecki 1918; Wirth 1928; Whyte 1943), or a member of a focal organization (Burawoy 1979; Kornblum 1974). However,

However, entry into complex organizations and business settings usually precludes the unobtrusive participant observer. To gather information from multiple layers of organizations or to study specific work groups may require explicit permission from officials.

Many field researchers have provided revea ing accounts of the initial dilemmas and subsequent strategies used in gaining access to industrial and commercial firms. Their problems revolve primarily around (1) perceptions of the legitimacy and validity of the research goals, (2) perceptions of the researchers' institutional affiliations and support, and (3) organizational power and authority. Gouldner (1965) in his study of a gypsum plant decided to undertake a double-entry negotiation process through the company management and the union. This strategy worked to the extent of gaining official approval at the upper levels of both corporate and union management for conducting his study. But he was impeded by an organizational group, lower management, who presided over the particular plant in which Gouldner wished to carry on his investigation. These lower-level managers were gatekeepers to important information and their recalcitrance cast a shadow over the research enterprise. Gouldner realized that triple entry of negotiations would have been more appropriate:

> But it soon became obvious that we had made a mistake, and the problem had not been to make a double-entry, but a triple-entry; for we had left out, and failed to make independent contact with a distinct group--the management of that particular plant. In a casual way, we had assumed that main office management also spoke for the local plant management and this, as a moment's reflection might have told us, was not the case. In consequence, our relations with local management was never as good as they were with the workers or with main office management (p. 256).

Fortunately, Gouldner and his colleagues were not denied total access, but they were limited in their data-gathering efforts. Gouldner's experience provides a telling illustration of difficulties encountered when gatekeepers do not consider research goals to be congruent with their perceptions of the organization's best interest.

In a study of bureaucracies, Blau (1964) confronted mixed responses to his request for access from the organizations which he approached. Differential enthusiasm for Blau's project was clearly linked to differential organizational goals of the various work settings he contacted. Blau's initial plan was to conduct a comparative analysis of work groups in a public and a private bureaucracy. This design was modified, however, after Blau was denied access by several of the private firms he had targeted. Even among public agencies, Blau was concerned that his access was restricted to innovative organizations.

> It may well be no accident that all old, established bureaucracies approached refused permission for the study and that both organizations that opened the way were relatively young ones, founded during the New Deal. Perhaps self-selection makes it inevitable that the organizations we study are least pronounced (p. 24-25).

Although Blau does not explicitly link his failure to gain access to a particular cause, his experience suggests that the gatekeepers of his reluctant organizations perceived his university affiliation to be out of line with the best interests of their corporations.

After completing a study of professional associations, Habenstein (1970b) determined that the level of confidentiality involved in the organizations' functions is associated with cooperative or noncooperative responses. (1970b). Organizations such as social welfare agencies must pay special attention to restricting the flow of information and consequently have "structural impediments" restricting agreements for access. But Habenstein suggests that a well prepared and documented request presented to organizational officials and a willingness to meet with organizational members constitute the most promising strategy.

In sum, many discussions of access negotiations by field researchers suggest the importance to the researcher of a careful, preliminary organizational analysis for successful attempts at gaining access. Gouldner underestimated the strength of coalitions in his focal organization; Blau was unable to enter rigid bureaucratic gates; and Habenstein identified structural impediments related to the technical core of organization (e.g. confidentiality of information flow). In view of these gatekeeping restrictions, positive outcomes to access negotiations with business organizations may be gained with organization analysis.

Boundaries

Applying open systems theory to problems in gaining access to business organizations clarifies how members of organizations relate to outsiders. Open systems theory was developed within psychology by Katz and Kahn (1968). Among sociologists, the work of Thompson (1967) has been of major importance. Unlike closed systems theory, this approach, from both the psychological and sociological perspectives, recognizes the salience of environment in organizational behavior.

A social-psychological view of organizations vis-a-vis open systems theory assigns an organic view of organizations. In other words, organizations can be viewed as systems that operate within an environmental context The divisions (or lines of demarcation) between organizations and their environments are referred to as "system boundaries." As defined by Miner (1982) in his review of open systems, boundaries are "those barriers between system and environment that determine degrees of openness for the system" (p. 172).

An organization has boundaries between itself and the environment, but also among its own subsystems. These subsystems are categorized by Katz and Kahn (1968) as (1) production or technical (concerned with products throughputs), (2) supportive (concerned with resource acquisition, distribution, and interorganizational relations) (3) maintenance (human resource functions) (4) adaptive (strategic planning) and (5) managerial (coordination and control over operations). An outsider needs to be aware of these divisions and the proprieties attached to each. For instance, Gouldner had obtained privileges from managerial officials to study phenomenon in the production subsystem. But failure to recognize the authority of the officials in the production subsystem resulted in resistance from these individuals.

Those activities that involve crossover, either between subsystems or between the system and the environment, are conceptualized as being either

boundary spanning activities or boundary transactions. The term "spanning" connotes bridging activities among organizational members; the term "transactions" connotes interactions between organizational members and outsiders. Field researchers need to be especially sensitive to boundary interactions because such activities call into play the vested interests of key players.

The importance of boundaries in viewing organizations relates to a basic tenet of management in complex and allegedly "rational" organizations, namely, an effort to reduce uncertainty. As Thompson (1967) describes organizations, rational organizations attempt to seal off their technical functions from their environment. These attempts are undertaken in order to provide closed system characteristics to an acknowledged open system. The intended effects are to minimize the influence of the environment over the functions of the organization. Boundaries protect, buffer, and smooth over uncertainty.

Boundary maintenance, or protection, is particularly applicable in organizations that exist in highly uncertain or changing environments. These environments are characterized as a "turbulent field" by Emery and Trist (1965). Under conditions of rampant change and uncertainty in relation to the organization's position among competitors, there is increasing concern for protection and a prevalence of xenophobia. In other words, as we suggested earlier, timing of the request to conduct research is all important. An organization undergoing rapid structural transformation or beset by economic uncertainty is likely to show little enthusiasm for an observational research enterprise.

This overview of boundary constructs in open systems theory can be woven in and out of our own attempts at gaining access to work settings. An account of these attempts and an analytical examination follows.

Method

Design and Procedures

The sampling plan for our field study included locating approximately 20 to 30 newly hired youth for the primary focus of our research. These youth

were identified in two large Ohio cities, Columbus and Cincinnati, coinciding with the institutional affiliation of the two co-investigators--the National Center for Research in Vocational Education at The Ohio State University and the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Cincinnati. The data-gathering design for the study included 96 hours of worksite observations for each adolescent worker to be conducted according to a bimonthly schedule beginning with the first day of work and extending over the course of 1 year. Interviews were also conducted with the young workers and others, such as co-workers, family, friends, and former teachers. Finally, interviews with employers and access to official documents provided additional information.

Consent to participate also had to be obtained from the youths. Simultaneously, cooperation from the employers was essential. A tactical decision was made to identify participants via their employers. There were three reasons for this decision. First, we did not want to jeopardize the youths' chances for employment by tagging participation in a research study to their applications for jobs. Second, the cooperation of employers was perceived as a more difficult negotiation than the cooperation of adolescent workers. Third, identifying those employers who hired noncollege youth permitted the researchers to sample among work sites from different segments of the economy.

The process of gaining access was continual throughout the study period as youth moved in and out of jobs and as changes occurred among managers. The report of access negotiations described here will be restricted to the initial negotiations, that is, those negotiations which resulted in enlisting young workers into the sample.

First Stage

The first stage of gaining access involved identifying the sector of the local economies of the two Ohio cites and identifying specific employers who were likely to hire entry-level workers within these sectors. Some of the events that occurred during this stage were discouraging and disheartening. At this point, we were primarily negotiating with organizational brokers, individuals not connected to the firms we wished to enter, but who were,

instead, occupants of such roles as agency director, and program planner. Most occupied boundary-spanning roles of some type. One was an executive on leave from a major national corporation whose current role was to establish corporate-education linkages through the Jobs for America's Graduates program (JAG); another was the director of vocational education for a city school system, and a third was the corporate liaison for the University of Cincinnati's fund-raising office. Although some of these brokers were extremely helpful, others attempted to co-opt the research or refused to participate.

The researchers attempted to identify the universe of local employers through nominations by these and other brokers connected to the youth labor market. Six economic sectors were identified through these discussions: (1) Banks, (2) insurance, (3) government, (4) service, (5) light manufacturing, and (6) heavy manufacturing. Although identifying economic sectors was fairly straightforward, identifying employers was more different

One personnel association challenged the researchers to identify the payoff to banking institutions and other firms for their cooperation. As correspondence from an official of this association states:

> On a personal note, please give a great deal of thought to what you can provide the company who participates. Some companies will turn the questions back to you and force you to convince them that what you are doing will benefit them.

Even after the researchers presented their request for assistance in identifying firms at an executive meeting, and after an article was printed in the association's newsletter, no cooperation came from this contact. Fortunately, this rebuff occurred early in the process of our attempts at gaining access and taught us an important lesson. After this rejection, we prepared a "slick," one-page project profile, outlining our research needs and enumerating the benefits to employers for participation in the research.

More threatening to the integrity of the research, however, was the reaction of a county official associated with Comprehensive Employment and Training. This individual agreed to provide contacts in firms only if the researchers modified the study design.

He was concerned about the implications of observational activities on the first day of a new job--fearing that this would have a negative effect on performance by causing the new worker to feel self-conscious. The researchers rejected this scenario, arguing that discussion prior to the worker's first day of work would set the stage for our role as a "shadow" from the initial day of employment and for up to a 1-year period to follow. Faced with our reluctance to accede to his fears, the official threatened to call every employer in town and to urge them not to cooperate. Fortunately, he did not carry out his threat.

An official from the JAG Program offered to distribute the researchers' request to companies but did not follow through. His uncooperative position was patently clear in his discussion of his views of the educational establishment. The interview transcripts reveal his bias and should have forewarned us not to expect his assistance:

> The basic problem can be summarized as that the kids are coming into the workplace poorly prepared in three areas. They're poorly prepared in basic employability skills, motivation, knowing what it is to get on the job and stay there and so on and that basic stuff, and they are unprepared in adequate vocational skills. Those three things are the things that we said at least that we are going to try to deal with because we think that the business community can help in dealing with them. We also said a couple of other things that have been operative. One of them is the educational community, which is back to the point that you are making. It doesn't really take responsibility for the employability of their graduates. They haven't accepted that as their responsibility; they have no mechanism for doing it.

This official's interests were in opposition to our research goals since his program utilized a training plan engineered by private industry, rather than a plan worked out with the educational establishment.

Other contacts with representatives from education, business, and government agencies also were affected by the political and social context when our access negotiations were occurring (in the spring of 1983). This was a time of transition in the job-training world. Federal legislation had eliminated CETA. The responsibility for manpower programs was being shifted to Private Industry Councils (PICs) under the guidelines of the Job Training

Partnership Act (JTPA). Officials whom we met were sensitive about their redefined roles. In a sense, the ground was moving in the job-training arena, resulting in unstable and unclear relationships between education programs and private industry, and between these institutions and the federal government. The prevalence of boundary maintenance activities by key actors encountered by the researchers during this period can be partially explained by this contextual information.

Assistance in identifying employers ultimately was provided by school officials in Columbus and by an array of sources in Cincinnati. Vocational educational administrators in Columbus provided the researchers with a list of companies and contact people sorted by the predefined economic sector categories. These contacts were companies that had hired graduates from the school system in recent years. Cincinnati contacts were provided by the University Foundation, a fund-raising organization on the campus with direct connections to well-placed officers in major local firms, and through educational networks established by previous community involvement by the researchers in that locale.

Second Stage

Direct contacts with employers began in April 1983. Some contacts resulted in immediate receptivity or refusal. Other contacts were sustained over several months, as permission had to be sought through various subsystems. A total of 81 contacts was made. Forty of these contacts or 50 percent required both written correspondence and a telephone or an person visit. The other 40 contacts were made through correspondence. The complete depiction of contacts, distributed by city and industrial sector, is presented in table 3. There is a notable symmetry evident in the distribution across sectors between the two cities, indicating the overall similarity of the two major markets.

TABLE 3

ACCESS CONTACTS BY CITY AND INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

Economic Sector	City		Sample
	Columbus	Cincinnati	
Banks	8	1	9
Insurance	8	2	10
Government	1	0	1
Service	34	17	51
Light Manufacturing	5	4	9
Heavy Manufacturing	0	1	1
	56	25	81

Utimately, access was provided in 14 companies to afford observations of 25 youth. These companies cover the array of economic sectors with the exception of the government and heavy manufacturing categories. Such a distribution is a realistic portrayal of the location of available entry-level jobs for noncollege youth during this time. Lack of representation in government and heavy manufacturing categories indicates the constricted hiring in these areas. Table 4 portrays the distribution of companies who hosted entry according to city and economic sector. Again, similarities in the distribution between the two cities is striking.

The specific types of businesses and industries that permitted initial access were a sheet metal shop, a coin and stamp store, two exercise and fitness facilities, two financial institutions, two fast-food establishments, an insurance corporate headquarters, an appliance service and sales shop, a hospital, a bakery, a convenience store, and a fastener factory. Subsequent access was gained in the following businesses and industries: a motel/hotel, a roller skating rink, a restaurant, a contractor, a department store, a day care center, insurance sales, band gigs, and entertainment department of a major amusement park. As can be seen from this list, considerable variety existed in the types of study sites. This variety was present across

organizational dimensions such as size of firm, functions, occupational opportunities, technology, structure, and management-labor relationships.

TABLE 4
HOSTING COMPANIES AND PARTICIPATING YOUTH
BY CITY AND INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

Industrial Sector	City			
	Columbus		Cincinnati	
	Company	Youth	Company	Youth
Finance/Insurance	2	3	1	2
Service	3	5	6	10
Light Manufacturing	1	4	1	1
	6	12	8	13

The variance in study sites necessitated some variance in the procedures used in gaining access. But two specific tactics were constant across sites. First, the researchers presented a clear, tightly focused explanation of the research program, its intended effects, and the consequences to the employer. The details of the research design were not important in and of themselves, but the specific involvement of the employer was essential. Second, personal meetings were closely tied to the successful negotiation of entry. Telephone conversations and correspondence might be part of the initial contact, but the study was best explained in person.

In addition to the previously mentioned project profile, a letter was composed (see Appendix A) to specify the costs and benefits of participation by employer. This letter was businesslike, avoided altruistic appeals. To assist researchers in understanding youth labor market problems, the school-to work-transition and so forth.

- What do you want me (the employer) to provide?
- How much time will it take?

- What type of businesses are involved?
- Will the information be private?
- How will I as an employer benefit by participating in this research?

Responses to these questions also were included in the context of the letter and helped reduce uncertainty by providing a rational, closed system image to a skittish employer. Threats to the employer were further reduced by meeting the researchers in person. The study could be better explained this way and doubts, fears, and other uncertainties could be assuaged.

By using a business-oriented letter and by personally meeting employers, we were also able to minimize concerns about our status and organizational affiliations. In general, the employers did not perceive that our link to the university, research organization, or The National Institute of Education would threaten their subsystems after meeting with us. This concern about researcher status is well articulated by Metz (1979), in her account of building relationships with school teachers while doing field work. In her words:

> People respond to the presence of others in terms of a number of standard statuses. In this case it was important that I was young, a student, and a woman. Each is a low status not ordinarily perceived as wielding much power. Those characteristics thus made me less threatening to the adults than a man in the middle of his academic career doing an identical study. My personal style is normally mild mannered, and I make a conscious decision to use that style together with my unalterable statuses as a research strategy p. 257).

Similarly, the researchers did not exploit their credentials as a tool for gaining access, greeting employers and others on a first name basis.

A less-constant aspect of gaining access relates to the original contact person. In some cases, the personnel or human resource department was appropriate. In other cases, contacts made in this way were an impediment to gaining access. Personnel departments are difficult gateways. Outside research activities may be viewed by personnel managers as competitive with their own efforts. In two or three instances, key personnel in this area felt they could benefit from the knowledge gained from this study. For example, the personnel office in a major national manufacturing company known for its

innovative employee training programs was extremely eager to have us conduct research they saw as beneficial to their programmatic goals. But more often than not, people in these departments erected a stone wall.

Generally, a more pliable entry point is a department manager or branch manager who has some supervisory role over new workers and who becomes personally interested in the study. Interest may be developed for reasons related to practical business applications or for less strictly work-related reasons. For example, one branch manager in a fast food establishment wanted to reduce her employee turnover rate that had reached an unusually high level of 150 percent over the last year. A department manager in a major corporate headquarters hoped to learn more about his training and managerial style.

The source of contact can be critical, however, in large organizations. Just as Gouldner found that triple entry would have worked better than double entry, we were also impeded in one organization by union officials. The management subsystem had offered conditional approval with the final approval depending on union consent. The sequence of approval was problematic to the union officals, however. While the local union president and his bargaining committee met with one of the researchers, he stated that, although the union would give "all comers a hearing," he would in no way permit the study to occur and in discussion with the union, the researchers were seen as management's tool.

There was little doubt in the union's eyes that results of the study would be used against workers during contract negotiations with management as had been the case with earlier management-initiated research. Clearly, the union should have been approached at an earlier point in time.

Participants in the Research

During the study we recruited 25 participants who worked in a total of 46 different job settings. The first observations were made in May 1983, and observations continued through May of the following year. Thus, some participants in the research were observed for 12 months whereas others were involved in the study for shorter periods of time.

Background characteristics of the 25 participants in the research are presented in table 5. Assumed names are used to identify the 11 males and 14 females who were recruited for the study. Most of the adolescent workers in the study came from working class or lower middle class family backgrounds as indicated by their parents' occupations. Some (Val, Lisa, Bob, and Diane) have upper middle class family backgrounds. All but one of these (Val) were en- rolled in college preparatory courses while in high school. The majority of the participants in the study were enrolled in either general track or vocational courses during high school. Seven participants (Dick, Al, Charles, Kelvin, Betty, Laurie, and Val) attended vocational schools while two (Peter and Lisa) attended parochial (Catholic) schools.

There was a wide range of average grades reported by the participants. A few (Betty, Kelvin, Lisa, and Diane) received mostly A's during their school careers, but the majority reported their average grade as C. Our participants ranged in age from 18 to 22 at the start of the study. Most, though were approximately 18-years-old and had graduated from high school in June, 1983.

The initial jobs held by the young workers who participated in the study are described in table 6. Although most of them eventually changed jobs during the course of their participation, several (Al, Rod, Ray, Peter, Helen, and Jerry) were still employed by the same companies that had initially hired them and were working similar jobs when we withdrew from the field. In all these cases, with the exception of Helen, the workers had received at least one salary increase during the time of their employment.

With very few exceptions (Al, Charles, Rod, Val, Donna, Peter and Terry) the young workers we observed were employed part-time in their jobs. Not only was their work limited to partial employment, but their hours were frequently scheduled at variable times during the week. In many cases, workers' schedules were not posted by employers until the beginning of the week in question.

The jobs themselves can be characterized as entry-level, low-skill or, in many cases, dead end positions. Some (shop hand, mail clerk, cashier) had

		Education				Family				
								Siblings		
Name	Birth Date	School Attended Public/Private	Grade Most Often Rec'd	Grad Date	Program of Study	Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation	sex	age	occupation
Donna	2/2/63	Brook Haven Public	C's	6/83	General	Divorced	Disabled	F	18	Secretary
Peter	3/17/63	Private Religious	C's		General	Construction Work	Homemaker			
Terry	9/9/63	Public	A's journalism art, music B-C's	6/82	General	Machinist	Art Work	F F	20 26	Homemaker (studying Homemaker acctng)
Miriam	2/1/66	Public	B's		General 9-10 Voc Ed 11-12	Foreman in Construction	Toy Assembler			
Lisa	3/5/62	Private Girls' Parochial HI School	A's	6/81	College Entrance	Manager	Teacher	F	23	Law School Student
Bob	12/29/65	7-12 Walnut Hills High School-Public	C's		College Entrance	Warehouse Manager	Hospital Volunteer	M M M	24	U.C. Student Missionary Norman Okla
Jenny	2/4/63	Public High School	B's	6/82	College Entrance	Salesman	Homemaker	M F		
Helen	3/10/65	Public High School	C's	6/83	General Education					
Ben		Public High School	B's & C's	6/82	General Education	Factory Worker				
Diane	7/25/64	Public	A's		General College Entrance	Accountant	Assisted Husband	M		Studying To Be Priest
Jerry	8/27/64	Public	B's		General	Cincinnati Milacron	Medical Dept Senco			
John	1/9/64	Public	C's	Left School 11-12	General 9-10	Truck Driver	Mgr Bushons Bakery			
Kim										

TABLE 5--Continued

Name	Birth Date	Education: School Attended Public/Private	Education: Grade Most Often Rec'd	Education: Grad Date	Education: Program of Study	Family: Father's Occupation	Family: Mother's Occupation	Siblings: Sex	Siblings: Age	Siblings: Occupation
		Mifflin High						M	20	Various Tasks-Pizza
		SE Career Ctr			General 9-10	Past: Oil Worker	Past: Secretary	F	22	Secretary
Al	9/28/68	(Cols) Public	B's	6/83	Vocational 11-12	Present: Disabled	Present: Unemply	M	19	Student
		Eastmoor & North						F		
		High (Grad) SE			General 9-10	Past: Electrician		M	49	Nervous Breakdown
Charles	1/2/68	Career Ctr (Cols)	C's	6/83	Vocational 11-12	Present: Disabled	Homemaker	M	36	Babysitter
		9-Public		Dropped						
		10-1/2 Pub - 1/2 Priv		Out		Self Emp				
		11-Priv Mt. Vernon, OH		11th		Upholstery Bus				
Rod	9/2/68	12-1/2 Public	C's	Grade	General	& Carp Real Estate Dev	Bookkeeper	M	16	
							Past: Bookkeeper	M	18	High School
		Beachcroft				Car	9-7 years	M	14	School
Karen	12/19/64	Cols Public	C's	6/83	General	Salesman	Present: S Clerk	M	15	School
								M	27	One Brother Died
		Linden McKinley High			College Entrance			M	22	Student at OSU
		Ft Hayes Career Ctr			9, 10, 11	Barber,		M		
Betty	8/14/64	(Cols) Public	A's	6/82	Performing Arts 12	Band Member	Homemaker	S	18	
		Westerville North			General College	Salesman-Cutting				
		SE Career Ctr			Entrance 9, 10, 11	Edges				
		(Westerville, OH)			Vocational Educ	Bulldozers and	Food Service	F		Lab Technician
Kelvin	11/12/64	Cols Public	A's	1983	11, 12	Insurance	at Post Office	F		
		Licking Mts High					Housekeeper			
		(Pataskala, OH)					Raised by	F		
Ray	12/20/64	Public	C's	9/81	College Entrance	Died When 3	Aunt)	M		
		Hoolton			General 9					
		(Hoolton, OH)			Voc Ed 10, 11	No	Sales	F	Older	
Cindy	11/26/63	Public	C's	1982	Voc Ed Coop 12	Father	Clerk	F	Older	
							Pres of Co			
							Wholesale			
					General 9-10	Salesman:	Sewing Notions			
Val	4/28/68	Public	B's		Voc Ed 11-12	Pharmaceutical	Fabrics			
		9-Indianola Jr HI								
		Linden-McKinley				Delivery				
		Ft Hayes Ctr			General 9-10	Person	Accounts	M	23	Army
Laurie	6/4/64	(Cols) Public	C's		Voc Ed 11-12	Paper Co	Clerk	M	18	
		Scarlet Oaks				Appliance				
		Vocational School			General 9-10	Repair		M	22	
Dick	9/9/64	Public	B's	6/82	Voc Ed 11-12	In Home	Homemaker	F	25	Homemaker
		Alben High School			General 9-10					
Janet	10/11/63	Public	B's	6/82	Voc Ed 11-12	?	?	?	?	

TABLE 5

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT WORKERS

Name	Industry/ Business	Position	Start Date	End Date	Duration	Wages (Date)	Full/Part Time	Range of Hours	Shift	Sole Employment
Al	Sheet Metal	Shop Hand	6/6/83	Still On Job	------	$3.75 $3.90	Full	40 hr/wk	8-4:30	Yes
Charles	Sheet Metal	Shop Hand	5/31/83	6/30/83	1 Month	Between $3 & $3.50	Full	40 hr/wk	8-4:30	No
Rod	Coin Shop	Clerk	1/82 1/83	9/7/83 ------	1 yr 9 mo ------	$3.50 $3.75	Full	8:00-4:00	Day	Yes
Karen	Health Spa	Recep-tionist	8/8/83	9/13/83	1 Month	$3.35	Part	Approx 36 hr/wk	Variable	Yes
Betty	Financial Inst	Telephone Recep	9/13/83	5/18/84	8 Months	$3.75/hr Raise $3.86	Part	35-39 hrs Weekly	Day	No
Kelvin	Restaur-ant	Cook, Carver	7/81 7/83	7/10/83 1/9/84	Approx 2 yrs 5 Months	$6.50 $6.00	Part	10:00-4:00 30-35 hr/wk	Evening	No
Ray	Financial Inst	Mail Clerk	9/12/83	Still On Job	------	Between $3.66-$5.00	Part	2:30-7:30	Evening	Yes
Cindy	Fast Foods	Hostess/ Salad Bar	9/29/83	12/5/83	6 Months	$3.35 Raise-$3.45	Part	Very-Less Than 12hr/wk	Evening 4:00-7:00	No
Val	Insurance Co	Secretary	6/13/83	------	------	? $6.10/hr	Full	8-4:30	Day	Yes
Laurie	Health Spa	Instructor	8/8/83	9/30/83	2 Months	$3.35	Part	9am-10pm M-W-F	Variable	Yes
Dick	Appl Repair Shop	Repairman	8/1/83	8/17/83	Approx 2 Weeks	------	Full	8-4:30	Day	Yes
Janet	Cafeteria	Cook-Server	6/10/83	8/12/83	2 Months	$3.35/hr	Part	2:30-6:00	Day	Yes
Donna	Spa 83	Recept 83	8/10/83	12/13/83	4 Months	$3.35/hr	Full	8:30am-10:30pm T-Th 8:30a-6:45p Sat-Sun	Day & Night	Yes

TABLE 6

CHARACTERISTICS OF INITIAL JOBS HELD BY ADOLESCENT WORKERS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Name	Industry/ Business	Position	Start Date	End Date	Duration	Wages (Date)	Full/Part Time	Range of Hours	Shift	Sole Employment
Peter	Appliance Repair Shp	Repair-man	8/24/83	Still On Job	-----	$4.25/hr	Full	8-4:30	Day	Yes
Terry	Health Spa	Trainer	8/8/83	11/83	3 Months	$225/ 2 weeks	Full	9am-10pm	Day	Yes
Miriam	Financial Inst	Bookkeep-ing	10/12/83	9/30/84	7 Months	$3.35/hr	Part	10:00-3:00	Day	Yes
Lisa	Health Spa	Exercise Trainer	9/10/83	10/12/83	1 Month	$3.35/hr	Part	Variable	Variable	No
Bob	Restaur-ant	Waiter	8/83	2/84	6 Months	$105/wk	Part	M-F 11:30-2:30	Day	Yes
Jenny	Health Spa	Exercise Trainer	9/10/83	Approx 10/12/83	1 Month	$3.35/hr	Variable	Variable	Yes	Yes
Helen	Financial Inst	Proof Mach Operator	10/13/83	Still On Job	-----	-----	Part	20-27 hrs Week	Day	
Ben	Fast Foods	Food Worker	10/83	1/29/84	3 Months	$3.35/hr	Full	40 Hours	Evening	
Diane	Fast Foods	Cashier	10/83	-----	-----	$3.35/hr	Full	40 Hours	Evening	No
Jerry	Manu-facturing	Materials Handler	9/1/83	Still On Job	-----	$3.40/hr $.45-90 days	Full	40 Hours	Afternoon	Yes
John	Skating Rink	Clock Rm Clrk/Clnr	1/15/84	3/30/84	2 Months	$3.35/hr	Part	20 Hours	Evening	
Christine	Retail Dairy Store	Cashier	6/1/83	10/30/83	5 Months	$3.35/hr	Part	20 Hours	Evening	

TABLE 6--continued

possibilities for enlargement and advancement. A shop hand in a sheet metal shop eventually could become a foreman. A mail clerk in a bank could advance to the position of department supervisor with minimal additional training. However, most jobs provided occupants with limited opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and to advance to another position in the organization. Although the position of health spa instructor held by three participants (Laurie, Lisa, and Jenny) included collateral responsibilities, these were considered demeaning and, worst of all, "boring" by the young workers.

Wages offered by the jobs held by participants in the research were varied. Most jobs paid the minimum wage ($3.35 per hr.) to start. Raises of a few cents per hour were contingent on favorable evaluations after a 30-, 60- or 90-day probation period.

Appendix A

Dear

I am studying young workers to see how they learn to handle new jobs. Attached to this letter is a profile of my study plans. To make this study successful, I need your help! I know that you will have further questions so lets start here:

Q. What do you want me (the employer) to provide?

A. I am asking you to help in two ways:

1. to introduce me to your new hires who are between the ages of 16 and 22 so that I may ask them to participate in our study,

2. to grant me permission to visit your workplace in order to observe the activities of your recently hired youth.

Q. How much time will this take?

A. I will be collecting information over a 9-month period. Ideally, I want to observe the newly hired youth on their first day at work. Following that first day, I wish to return to the job site twice each month for four hours each time. Over a 9-month period, this amounts to about 76 hours of my presence in each work setting.

Q. What types of businesses are involved?

A. I am involving a variety of types of businesses in this study in order to compare how young people adjust to different kinds of work. This variety will include representation (but is not limited to) food services, insurance, manufacturing, automobile service, construction, and retail businesses.

Q. Will my identity and my organization's identity be protected?

A. Yes, I will not identify the names of companies or people in our reports of this study. Rather, I am interested in the overall picture of how young people adjust to work.

Q. How will I as an employer benefit by participating in this research?

A. The outcomes of this study will provide specific ideas to help you deal with new workers. This study will lead to:

- o a better understanding of the problems of young workers
- o new ideas for training
- o ways to help new workers get along with others
- o a comparison of the effects of work environments

Such information can be very helpful in reducing turnover among new, young employees. Additionally, this information is valuable for influencing educational policy to make schools more effective in preparing youth for work.

Sincerely,

REFERENCES

Berger, Peter. Sociology: A Biographical Approach. New York: Basic Books, 1972.

Blau, Peter M. "The Research Process in the Study of The Dynamics of Bureaucracy." In Sociologists at Work, edited by Phillip E. Hammond, pp. 16-49. New York: Bak Books, 1964.

Bogdan, R., and Biklen, S. Qualitative Research for Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1983.

Burawoy, Michael. Manfuacturing Consent. Chicago: The Unversity of Chicago Press, 1979.

Dobbert, M. L. Ethnographic Research. New York: Praeger, 1982.

Emery, Fred E., and Trist, Eric L. "The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments," Human Relations, 18 (1965): 21-32.

Goetz, J., and LeCompte, M. Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. London: Academic, 1984.

Gouldner, Alvin. Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy. New York: The Free Press, 1965.

Habenstein, Robert W., ed. Pathways to Data. Chicago: Aldine, 1970a.

Habenstein, Robert W. "Occupational Uptake: Professionalizing." In Pathways to Data, edited by Robert W. Habenstein, pp. 99-121 Chicago: Aldine, 1970b.

Heath, S. B. "Questionning at Home and in School." In Doing the Ethnography of Schooling, edited by G. Spindler. New York: Holt, 1982.

Katz, Daniel, and Robert L. Kahn. The Social Psychology of Organizations. New York: Wiley, 1968.

Kornblum, William. Blue Collar Community. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Liebow, Elliot. Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men. Boston: Little, Brown, 1967.

Lynd, Robert S., and Lynd, Helen M. Middletown in Transition. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1939.

Metz, Mary Haywood. Classroom Corridors. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

Miner, John B. Theories of Organizational Structure and Process. Chicago: The Drydan Press, 1982.

Park, Robert E., and Burgess, Ernest Watson. The City. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1925.

Thomas, W. I., and Znaniecki, Florian. The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1918, 3 vols.

Thompson, James D. Organizations in Action. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Wirth, Louis. The Ghetto. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1928.

Whyte, William F. Street Corner Society. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943.

CHAPTER 3

FINDING A JOB

by

Kathryn M. Borman

The entry of young people into the labor market following high school implies the process of personal mobility and a series of transitional experiences constituting an important period in the life cycle (Piker 1968). For many this period is frustrating and difficult. This is especially true when there is no support to ease the movement from a nonwork to work status. Without experience, adolescents often fail to find meaningful work. They also lack "personal resources and sponsorships, qualifications, aspirations, expectations, and knowledge". Further, there are few institutional arrangements and organizational policies and practices to assist their job seeking efforts (Corwin forthcoming.)

During this period, finding work is only one of the major tasks facing young. They also are concerned with developing love interest, achieving legal statuses, and moving away from home. Surprising, though, many make the transition with relative ease.

Although it is important to consider labor market entry from the perspective of personal mobility and life cycle issues, the problem of finding a good job should be seen as a societal dilemma. Youth unemployment figures tell the story in stark terms. According to figures for a recent year, although the overall unemployment rate overall reached 7.6 percent, the rate for adolescents was 19.1 percent (Bureau of Statistics, 1980). Most dismal were the figures for minority youth who suffered unemployment at the rate of 37.4 percent. According to Dayton,

> Persons between the ages of 16 and 19 years constitute only 10 percent of the work force but over 20 percent of the unemployed. In both categories nonwhites have unemployment rates more than double those for whites. Thus, unemployment in the United States falls heavily on the shoulders of youth and particularly minority youth. (Dayton 1981).

Acknowledgements: I would like to acknowledge the help of Margaretha Vreeburg who provided assistance in organizing this chapter.

In sum, many unemployment among all youth constitutes a major societal issue and the problem of unemployed minority youth is especially acute.

Given the dismal labor market picture and the personal stress many suffer during the process of getting a job, it is useful to consider the manner in which youth attempt to secure jobs. As Dayton suggests, little research has been done in this area, except for the discussion of occupationally related decision making among career-oriented college students and the "manuals, handbooks, and guides designed to instruct youth in purportedly effective job-seeking methods" (Dayton 1981). In this paper, the discussion will focus on the job search activities of the 25 youth in the Adolescent Worker Study and examine the relative effectiveness of these activities in leading to employment. This type of analysis, as Dayton has argued, is particularly critical since unemployed youth require concrete assistance in their job seeking activities. I could locate no qualitative data reporting the job search strategies used by young job seekers. However, there are some studies in this area using survey data to examine how people obtain jobs. Previous work includes Dayton's (1981) study of young persons' job search activities, Miguel and Foulk's (1984) research on youths' perception of employer standards, and the work of Bishop, Brown and Hollenbeck (1983) on the job search activities of recent high school graduates and other job seekers. Bishop (1983) also reviews data documenting the percentages of workers over-all (1) using a particular job-seeking method, and (2) finding a job through using a particular method. Job seekers use such formal methods as answering newspaper ads and working with an employment service as well as such informal strategies as relying upon friends or relatives to obtain jobs. These data reveal some interesting contradictions:

> Even though a larger proportion of all jobs are found through contacts made through friends and relatives, the proportion of job seekers currently using this method is very small. About 25 percent of unemployed job seekers currently have contacted the unemployment service . . . yet only 3.6 to 5.1 percent of all jobs are found throught this method.

Thus, Bishop concludes that although informal methods of job seeking are more likely than formal procedures to lead to employment than formal procedures, job seekers of presumably all ages continue to rely most on formal channels.

Dayton's conclusion about the job search strategies among young job seekers are similar. However, Dayton's findings are more difficult to interpret than those reported by Bishop. Respondents in the former study include a younger (age 20) and older (age 30) cohort drawn respectively from the National Science Foundation studies and Project Talent. Respondents were asked to report their job-seeking strategies and to rate each according to how "helpful" each was in helping them find work. However, respondents were not asked to indicate which particular method secured a specific job.

Among the job-seeking activities ranked as most helpful by Dayton's respondents were "writing up and sending out a resume," "seeking help from friends," "searching the classified want ads," registering with a private employment service," "going door to door to potential employers' workplaces," and "seeking help from family."

In a related analysis, Dayton examined the extent to which such background features such as race, sex, and ability made a difference in job-finding success. Two types of analyses were performed. First, a set of correlational analyses revealed a strong association between employment, race, and sex with white males most likely of the race and sex groups to be employed. A series of step-wise multiple regressions were performed to determine which factors best predicted employment status. The important predictors of employment were sex and socioeconomic status.

These findings strengthen Steinberg et al.'s (1981) claim that sex and social class are the major influences on an individual's occupational course. It is not simply that these personal characteristics exist in a vacuum, but that they are regarded as socially significant by parents, peers, teachers, and employers who continually shape young peoples' destinies throughout their adolescence (Steinberg, et al. 1981).

Assumptions About Finding a Job

In this section, I will consider the assumptions guiding the investigation of job search strategies used by young job seekers in the Adolescent Worker Study. Thus, we could expect that job search strategies used by these employed adolescent workers would include those that previous studies had identified as

most effective, namely, informal methods of job finding such as relying on friends and relatives.

Although a primary expectation is that these employed adolescent workers were likely to have used family and friends to obtain their jobs, this by no means implies that these individuals were necessarily engaged in making economically rational choices. Such a model of getting a job assumes that these individuals (1) have complete information relative to the choices they must make, (2) have complete freedom of mobility in the particular marketplace in which a job choice is being made, and (3) operate in a situation of pure competition wherein selecting a job occurs as the outcome of weighing the merits of mutually independent choices (Katona 1953).

This model assumes that rational decision making is pervasive in everyday life. The individual confronts a problem, deliberates its solution, weighs alternative actions in terms of their consequences, and makes the best choice (Piker 1968). However, given their limited experience and the likelihood of cultural comembership in a particular reference group, youth are apt to be led to a particular job choice through a series of habitual or familiar actions. The first assumption is that getting a job is likely to be regarded by successful young job seekers as a result of either their job-seeking persistence (as opposed to rational choice) or pure chance (as opposed to a set of appropriate job-seeking strategies).

There is empirical support for the assumption that youth regard persistence and luck as most helpful in locating jobs. When Dayton (1981) analyzed those factors regarded by young job seekers as barriers or aids in finding work, his results indicated that although market-related factors such as the condition of the economy were perceived as top-ranking barriers, personal attributes and luck were seen as important aids in locating work:

> Top-ranking aids cluster around a battery of personal characteristics that include personality, job-seeking persistence, ability to get along with bosses and co-workers, reading and writing ability, work qualifications, willingness to work part-time or odd hours, and so on. Chance appears as a top-ranked aid here also; for some reason, young people apparently attribute their successes to luck, but not their failures.

It is likely that young people see luck or chance operating in the world for their benefit as a concomitant of their view of themselves as charmed or

endowed with mythic qualities. This interpretation makes sense given the propensity of adolescents to construct a personal fable or myth that captures their ideal image of themselves (Keating 1980). This propensity to daydream and fantasize about their lives assists adolescents in attaining their goals. However, this predisposition can be detrimental if their ideal representations of themselves prevents them from breaking away from habits and patterns that ultimately decrease the likelihood of seizing opportunities.

A second assumption is that unless they are guided, cajoled, and supported by experienced friends and relatives who are well integrated into the opportunity structure, young job seekers are likely to use strategies they have habitually relied upon in other job-seeking contexts. Because they may see job-finding success as getting a lucky break, youth may not weigh alternative job search strategies. Thus, job search and job choice are rarely based on a careful and deliberate consideration of rational choices among a universe of opportunities. In fact, concern with the characteristics of a particular job may be of little importance in work decisions made by many youth: For example, some drop out of school neither to get a particular job nor to begin a specific occupational profession, but to go to work in a specific workplace known to them (Piker 1968).

Rather than beginning to work in a job that connects them to a career line, most youth regard the job world as a place to enter out of necessity and convenience. For most working class youth, such as the majority of those in the Adolescent Worker Study, pay and job security are the most salient aspects of their jobs.

Among black youth, for example, local community and peer group standards may support the development of a set of occupational goals and job-seeking strategies with mainstream values (Ogbu, forthcoming). Black youths in Stockton, California, compared with their white peers, were far more likely to have gotten into trouble with the law, to have met violent deaths, or to be experiencing frustration and disappointment in jobs they saw as unfulfilling on a number of dimensions. Ogbu attributes these differential outcomes, in large part, to the stress in the black community on beating the system, "conning the man," and so forth.

Finally, a third assumption is that for minority youth and especially for young women job search efforts are likely to be negatively affected by conditions governing the labor markets. Employers' policies toward young black workers function as a barrier to young black job aspirants. Most young black job seekers avoid firms that they suspect to have policies against hiring blacks. Discrimination, of course, may be subtle. In a comparison of equally educated and equally skilled whites and blacks, it was determined that, despite their similar backgrounds, blacks were more likely than their white counterparts to have been rejected on job interviews and to have submitted multiple applications before finding work (Kidder 1967). Also, blacks tended to use more formal sources of job information, presumably to compensate for their lack of integration into a network of job-connected relatives and friends, an advantage they did not share with whites. Like blacks, young women seem to be informally excluded from certain kinds of jobs. Young women disproportionately seek clerical and low-level social service agency jobs, as assisting with food service in a nursing home (Lesher and Snyderman, 1965).

Although all youth are handicapped by their limited knowledge of occupations and job opportunities within the firms they join, blacks and other minority youth seem especially burdened by labor market variables that considerably reduce their job-seeking options. For example, most businesses in the past 30 years have located their operations in the suburban periphery. Nationally, fewer than 17 percent of blacks live outside the central city, limiting job opportunities for many who are dependent on public transportation.

Certain occupations historically and currently have excluded blacks because blacks are less likely than their white counterparts to be better integrated into societal institutions; therefore, it is not surprising that although 39 percent of white males had jobs waiting for them on after high school graduation, only 29 percent of their black male counterparts were able to make this easy transition. However, girls suffered more by comparison. Whereas 22 percent of white, female high school graduates awaited employment, only 11 percent of young black women were similarly advantaged (Parrella, Bogan, and Swanstrum 1964).

In summary, there are a number of inaccurate assumptions regarding the nature of youths' job search activities that guide their inquiry. First, youth

are likely to rely on friends and relatives for job-finding information and, correspondingly, to use formal job search strategies less frequently. Second, youth are more likely to view job-finding success as linked to their persistence in locating work or to luck than they are to a process of rational decision making. Finally, although labor market conditions adversely affect all young job seekers, job search activities for minority youth and young women are particularly constrained by employers' tacit reluctance to hire them. Other widely diverse factors, such as inadequate transportation and the negative effects of peer group and community norms, are likely to hamper job-seeking efforts of poor and minority youth.

Method

To determine the extent to which the 25 young workers in the study used particular job-seeking strategies, careful examination of several sources of information was made. Observational field notes, current events interviews, life history interviews, and work history interviews were reviewed, and each job search activity was documented. The series of interviews was the most important source of information.

Subsequently, a listing of the types of job search activities and the contexts of these activities was made for each subject. Job search strategies were categorized according to the classification schemes generally used in previous research. Use of preestablished categories was harmonious with the data. In other words, the integrity of the data was not violated by applying an "etic" of predetermined set of data organizers since the same categories were generated "emically" or naturally from the current data.

Results

Since the majority (68 percent) of young workers in the study changed jobs and/or became unemployed during the study, job-search activities dominated their lives at some point during the research. Some youth were chronically unemployed or underemployed. (John was without steady work for 8 of the 10 months that he participated in the research). Thus, the discussion that follows is based upon related findings for the 17 youth who were called on to locate work.

The discussion focuses on the most frequently used job search strategies by providing illustrations of these strategies from taped and transcribed field notes and interview data from particular participants in the study. I have chosen a few cases rather than to summarize each. Laurie and Charles were both unemployed for long periods of time during the course of the study and were also fairly energetic in attempting to locate work. The following narrative is heavily dependent on details from their case histories. Although the analysis is tied to a limited number of cases, the illustrations from these cases are representative of the kinds of job-finding strategies and techniques observed among all 17 job seekers in the study.

The job search strategies of consulting family and friends, using the telephone, and going door to door was by far the most frequently used job search method. By and large, this strategy was productive, resulting in employment almost 60 percent of the time. Ten of the adolescent job seekers used this strategy at least once; some, particularly those who were frequently without jobs, used this strategy with other informal and formal methods.

Laurie

Laurie spent most of her time during the study unemployed and looking for work. When she was first recruited for the study in May 1983, she had just begun to work as an instructor at a health spa. She had learned about this position from a friend who had recently been hired by the same establishment. She held this job for 4 months, but grew increasingly unhappy with her work since it entailed a good deal more than instructing aerobics and exercise classes. Cleaning the locker room area and minding the parking lot were two job-related chores that Laurie found particularly distasteful and "boring."

She located another job by using the "yellow pages" of the telephone directory to secure names of child care centers, she used this strategy earlier to "research" the field of day care work. This technique was used at least once by six of the job seekers who, like Laurie, subsequently telephoned perspective employers.

> Interviewer: When did you actually start looking for a new job?
> Laurie: Well, I called Busy Body Child Care on Wednesday last week.

Interviewer: Why did you call them?
Laurie: I just felt, "Wow, I'll never get out of the spa business; and I just called."
Interviewer: How did you get their number?
Laurie: Called information. 411.
Interviewer: How did you know they were hiring?
Laurie: I didn't.
Interviewer: How did you know that Busy Body Child Care existed?
Laurie: Well . . . what had happened . . . is I had looked in the phone book like 5 months ago, and they had things like ABC Nursery, stuff like that. So, I asked for the requirements, and I thought maybe some day I will do that. I was really thinking about it. I was thinking, 'I want to work on the other end of the spectrum with children now instead of adults.' I just thought, 'Well, why not.' So I called information and I said, 'Do you have any numbers for Busy Body Child Care?' And she gave me that one. I called and asked if they were hiring and they said, Yes, we are. Would you like an interview?' And I said, 'Yes.' They called me . . . it must have been Monday. I went in Tuesday. They said they would call me on my day off Thursday. They called me on Thursday at 10 a.m. (10/5/83).

However, Laurie's job at the day care center lasted less than a month. She was fired by the staff who determined that she didn't have enough control over the children. Her next leads were obtained through connections with rela-tives and friends. One lead was provided by her mother who had worked as an employee of the police department. It did not concern a posted position but rather it concerned a possible job as an aerobics instructor for cadets at the police academy:

Interviewer: How did you find out about the job?
Laurie: Mom used to work down there at the police department and met a lot of friends, and I became their friend, and I was talking to a lot of police officers, and I asked, What do you have to go through?' And they told us Weights' but they never had anything like plain exercise or aerobics, and I said, Oh wow, wouldn't that be a good idea.' And I got off of on that and he said, Yeah.' It kind of fell through (10/5/83).

Laurie remained out of work for the next 5 months, the duration of the study. During this period, her chief sources of job information were friends, particularly her boyfriend; relatives, especially her mother; and adult "contacts," notably a teacher and the principal of her high school who were both well connected into local entertainment and media. Her boyfriend put her in touch with personnel at a university-affiliated research facility where she applied for a position as stock clerk. This job, as well as one at an automobile

insurance office that she learned about from her mother, did not even result in an interview.

The greatest excitement and tension for Laurie were the auditions and interviews she got for jobs in the entertainment industry. Like many of the young people employed at health spas in the study, Laurie's ambitions intermittently centered on a career in the field of entertainment. Laurie's experience was limited to some acting in high school. She was very involved in drama club productions, and subsequently achieved the sponsorship of both her high school principal, Dr. West, and her teacher, Mr. Sontag.

Laurie got leads on two jobs: a small bit part in a major Hollywood-produced movie being filmed in the city and a job as production assistant at a local TV station. She saw the latter job as particularly desirable because it was linked to the job of floor director, her ultimate career goal. Laurie described her initial contact and subsequent experience with Channel 11 in this way:

> Laurie: . . . I called Channel 11, and then I just happened to be plugged in with one of the producers there who knew Mr. Sontag and Dr. West since they used to work there. And he talked to me several times, and we went out to lunch and he talked about this position that was opening, and I was really excited about this, and they didn't call me about the movie . . . really, my principal and my teacher, that's the only way I am involved . . . [in show business]. Both of those things happened to me on one day, I had an interview. They had to interview eight other people, I understand, but I was really bummed out when I didn't get the job. Interviewer: It's hard. It's a real tough field to break into and you have . . .
> Laurie: But, he . . . [the producer] really made the job harder than it really was. Not that he had anything against women working there, I don't think, . . . But I showed him my resume and he said, 'You have several different job qualifications here. What do you really want to do?' I put director . . . someday . . . I put director (10/5/83).

Laurie's perception was that the television producer who interviewed her made the job "harder than it really was" perhaps because he wished to discourage a woman from persisting in a field about which she appeared to be ambivalent. She may not have understood the politics of getting a foothold in the entertainment industry where personal contacts are extremely important in securing work. From Laurie's perspective, the key in landing a job in the entertainment industry was self-presentation:

Interviewer: What do you think is the most successful method of hunting for a job? What have you been told or what have you learned from experience?
Laurie: I really haven't had anyone teach me how to look for a job except what they told me at Ft. Hayes . . . that was that you could read in the paper and other places that Players Theater will advertise auditions. The thing they taught us was as soon as you walk in you are auditioning for the job and so you have to watch what you do. For theater it is not like looking for another job. They will have people out here, planted to hear what you say. It is not like a normal job. I don't think a company will say, 'Let's get people out there and have them listen to what everyone says.' Just theater does that. So we were taught to dress for the occasion, not overdress or underdress . . . don't act cocky . . . just basically that is all I have been taught. But on my own . . . just looking in the paper and phoning with a nice phone presentation voice. Since I worked at the spa . . . that wasn't too hard to develop. (2/21/84)

Rather than emphasizing the importance of timing, favorable contacts in the business, career options in the entertainment field, and so on, Laurie's teachers at Ft. Hayes High School had reinforced the importance of physical appearance and self-presentation in auditioning for a role. Looking at want ads and telephoning with a "nice phone presentation voice" constituted the best job search aids, according to these same teachers. Yet only four of our participants consulted the want ads at least once and none actually obtained a job using this method.

Although she never became cynical about her situation, Laurie did decide to register for unemployment benefits, an experience she found frustrating. The following notes are a summary of a conversation Laurie had with one of the researchers:

I asked Laurie what else she had done to find a job and she did tell me that she did go down to the unemployment office. Her mom was encouraging her to file for unemployment, and her boyfriend mentioned that sometimes at the unemployment office they help you find a job. She went down and waited hours to see a counselor. She told the counselor what her interests were: physical activities, spas, exercise, and acting. After looking under those types of jobs, the employment counselor said they didn't have anything and that her best bet was to find a job by herself. So Laurie was disappointed at the assistance that this office provided. While she was down there she decided not to file for unemployment. She was hoping that she would hear about one of those jobs today and then she won't need to file for unemployment (4/5/84).

During the time she was without work, Laurie applied for a position as a jazzercise instructor. However, she ultimately decided not to take the position when it was offered because her hours were limited to one class per week and because "the fact that she . . . [would have] to sell her body one more time" was disturbing for her.

Laurie's subsequent job search activities centered principally on consulting newspaper ads and seeking advice from her boyfriend and mother. Her plans for a career in entertainment began to fade, and Laurie began instead to see additional schooling as a means of preparing her for work as a physical therapist, a job that would allow her to use her knowledge of the body and to express her concern for people. At the same time that she was forming these plans, Laurie was considering the benefits and costs of other jobs. One was a position as a sales representative for a manufacturing concern, a job for which she applied but was not hired. This job would have required frequent in-state travel. In response to the interviewer's question about what was more important, a job or her relationship with her boyfriend, Laurie replied as follows:

> Laurie: The job . . . I have to think about where I'm going to be in 10 years from now. Am I still going to be working in spas or what? The bad thing about that is I want to go to school and travel at the same time. At the same time, I could be saving money up, then be promoted to supervisor and still go to school.
> Interviewer: What school are you thinking about?
> Laurie: M.S.U. now. I've made up my mind in something else, too. I want to go into physical therapy right now and work with people. I thought that would be really neat because right now the acting is okay . . . but I'd rather just have that as a side hobby and then have something really good. I want to go into physical therapy, and have acting on the side, and have my other job, too. Anyway, to answer your question, the job is really important. I just don't want to leave everything I have here (4/5/84).

However, attending college was dependent on finding work. After unsuccessfully applying for two more jobs one as a receptionist and the other as a clerk and still not locating a job, Laurie was spending most of her time doing yard work at her parents' home and watching soap operas in the afternoon. She filed for unemployment in late April and was still without work in May.

Charles

Unlike Laurie, Charles understood that young workers were particularly constrained by their lack of good connections to the labor market: "You got to

know the right people to find a job," was a phrase he frequently repeated to the researchers. In addition to not knowing the right people, Charles was plagued by health problems which included a leg injury from an accident he suffered at Major's sheet metal shop, a "horrible" rash he suffered while traveling through Alabama with his mother, and other difficulties which frequently prevented him from actively looking for work. To add to his troubles, Charles was arrested for driving while intoxicated, losing his license, serving a brief sentence in jail, and receiving a stiff fine for his charge.

Charles' initial employment at Major's had been secured shortly before being hired full-time and joining the study through a work-study placement he had received while in the spring of his senior year in high school. He subsequently lost this position after failing to report for work on Monday after his arrest for drunken driving during the weekend. His only subsequent employment during the remaining 8 months of the study was obtained through a temporary employment services agency and through neighborhood contacts, although Charles also relied upon his girlfriend for information about job openings. Charles' major goal was to earn money by the following:

> Charles: Something easy . . . something that don't take much labor or knowledge . . . Like a sitting job, a cash register, or something. Working a fast food . . . [operation] wouldn't be all that bad. I'd be standing up all day, but I wouldn't be picking things up, like that sheet metal job . . . that would be hard for me right now. I could handle sheet metal because that's not too heavy, but loading trucks and stuff like that . . .
> Interviewer: How are you finding out about these jobs? . . . Quick Service Gas, Sam's Drive Thru?
> Charles: Friends. Marge told me about the one at Sam's. She saw a sign up there that they needed help. We went up there at the same time to fill out applications. Marge, she really doesn't have time because she goes to school. She gets home at 4 and let's say, goes to work from 5 to 10 or 11. That would shoot her whole day, and she would probably have to work on the weekends, too. She might not go for it (1/25/84).

Limited in his mobility by not having a car, Charles relied on others, particularly Marge who, because of her busy schedule, though, she was not likely to be able to provide the support Charles apparently needed to follow through on jobs. The jobs were a mostly part-time, low-skill level jobs chosen as appropriate because of Charles' poor physical health.

A fairly substantial number of job seekers in the study applied directly for jobs by either walking into an establishment or calling a potential employer. These strategies were used at least once by 24 per-cent of participants in the study. Their success, however, in obtaining work through these methods was limited. Only two were actually hired by employers contacted in person or over the telephone.

Charles used this strategy although it, too, failed to produce successful results.

> Interviewer: What other ways do you find out about jobs besides friends?
> Charles: Just go in there.
> Interviewer: Walking in cold?
> Charles: Yeah, ask them if they need help, accepting applications . . .
> Interviewer: What kinds of places do you walk into?
> Charles: Any kind right now. I try to stay away from . . . [anything] strenuous, like warehouses. I'd like to get on over here at Nationwise, plus it's also just across the street. It's a lot of loading and unloading, you start out with. I can handle that . . . driving a fork lift, you have to have experience in that. Mostly just fast foods, stuff like that. There are so many of those around (1/25/84).

Although going door to door to advertise his local lawn mowing business gained Charles some customers, he saw yard work as something to do to get out of the house and fill the time but not as constituting a "real job."

> Charles: I was thinking about becoming a life guard.
> Interviewer: Oh, ya, really.
> Charles: I'm a good swimmer and everything, and I like helping people, so I decided, also there would be a lot of girls . . . that. . . right now I would like to work anywhere. To get some experience behind me and something, you got to start from the bottom. I was going to be a dishwasher just for a couple of weeks to get some money together, I was thinking of moving, but . . .
> Interviewer: Moving away from here?
> Charles: Ya . . . go out and try to make it on my own. If I got a little push behind me it would help a little more, be aggressive, get what I want.
> Interviewer: How about this lawn mowing stuff? How much of that do you do?
> Charles: Well, we do about two lawns a day . . . it's only two people. We make about ten dollars a day average but . . . like on Saturday we have four or five lawns lined up, we make about $50, and that's not bad nah . . . it's not like working someplace else--you get it all at once. We get $10, $20 a week. Spent it

to put gas in the tank or take girls out or something. Really can't make enough money to do what I please with. That's why I have to find a real job (6/20/84).

Charles, however, did not obtain work in either of these areas. And, although finding work was clearly an important goal, Charles' earlier work history, poor health, and driving record all conspired to make him a most unattractive prospective employee from an employer's perspective. To compensate for his personal liabilities and his lack of influential contacts, Charles might well have been assisted by a federally, locally or businesssponsored program designed to integrate "problem" youth into the world of work. Charles, almost accidentally called such agency, but backed off from the program when he realized what it was.

Charles: I called this place and heard it on the radio, this place, you know where they help you find jobs, I called them. They were going to put me with a counselor, and they were suppose to call back. A couple days went by . . . they never called back. I called them back and told them, 'What's the deal?, and asked if they were going to get in touch with me. She said that they probably ain't got around to it yet, and the next day the lady called. What they are really doing is having classes try to teach you how to find a job.
Interviewer: On really, is this with CETA or . . . ?
Charles: No, uh. Job options or something like that, and they have two different kind of classes. One kind would teach you how to write resumes and stuff like that, and the other one was try to find out what you would like to do, what you are good in. And she said that it would take awhile. I pretty much know all that stuff. As for them helping me find what I want to do, I'm not sure that's a good idea because I'm not really sure, being young and everything (3/19/84).

By the end of the period of research, Charles was still underemployed and doing yard work in his neighborhood.

Conclusion

Finding work is a difficult process for most young workers. As was suggested earlier, youth are beset by structural problems inherent in the dismal picture of youth unemployment that confronts them and by the personal dilemmas that inevitably arise for all young people during this period in their life cycle.

Most striking to the adult observer about adolescent job seek-ers is the mixture of naivete and cynicism that characterizes their attitude toward finding a job. Laurie, for example, believes that self-presentation is critical to finding and eventually getting a job. She also believes that she can maintain her current relationships, stay in Columbus, locate just the right job, and go to college even after several months of unemployment and frustrating job searches. On the other hand, she suspects, probably correctly, that the entertainment business is sexist and that counsel-ing services are poorly equipped to provide advice about all jobs, particularly those in the performing arts and media.

Charles' health problems become a shield against the reality of being out of a job for several months. He persistently overlooked the handicap his "injuries" presented to an employer. Employers of adolescent workers are likely to be primarily interested in a male teenage worker, because of their physical strength, agility, ability to tolerate long hours, and so on. One fast food manager in the study remarked, "That's the main reason we hire them . . . (teenage workers), they're strong, can move fast and don't tire out too easily during a rough shift." Yet, Charles understood the politics of finding a job through good contacts. Sadly, he had too few to use in his job-seeking efforts.

Notes

1. There are two recent British studies reporting on the job search activities of youth leaving school for work. These two studies, M. West & P. Newton, The Transition from School to Work (New York: Nichols, 1983) and J. Maezels, Adolescents' Needs and the Transition from School to Work (London: Atheone Press, 1970), use survey and interview data to report sources of help, occupational choices and other aspects of the school-to-work transition.

References

Bishop, J.; Brown, J.; and Hollenbeck, K. Recruiting Workers: How Recruitment Policies Affect the Flow of Applicants and Quality of Workers. Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational, The Ohio State University, 1983.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, News, 3 October 1980.

Corwin, R. "Organizational Skills and the Deskilling' Hypothesis." Becoming a Worker. Edited by Borman and J. Reisman, Norwood, New Jersey: Albex, 1985.

Dayton, C. W. "The Young Person's Job Search: Insights from a Study." Journal of Counseling Psychology 28 (1981): 321-333.

Katona, G. "Rational Behavior and Economic Behavior." Psychological Review 60 (1953): 307-317.

Keating, D. P. "Thinking Processes in Adolescence." In Handbook of Adolescent Psychology, edited by J. Adelson. New York: Wiley, 1980.

Kidder, A. H. Interracial Comparisons of Labor Market Behavior. Unpublished Ph.D. dis., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1967.

Leshner, S. S., and Snyderman, G. "Job Seeking Patterns of Disadvantaged Youth." Employment Source Review 53-55.

Miguel, R. J., and Foulk, R. C. Youth's Perceptions of Employer Standards. The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Columbus: The Ohio State University, 1984.

Ogbu, J. "Stockton California Revisited: Joining the Workplace." In Becomcoming a Worker, edited by K.M. Borman and J. Reisman. Forthcoming.

Perrella, V. C., and Waldman, E. Out of School Youth--Two Years Later." Monthly Labor Review (1966) 1260-68, 1416-24.

Piker, J. Entry into the Labor Force. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, The University of Michigan-Wayne State University, 1968.

Steinberg, L.; Greenberger, E.; Jacobi, M.; and Garduque, L. "Early Work Experience: A Partial Antidote for Adolescent Egocentrism." Journal of Youth and Adolescence 10 (1981): 141-157.

CHAPTER 4

ATTRIBUTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

by

Elizabeth M. Penn

Although work experience is the object of many investigations, current research neglects the context in which the job occurs. The employee is too often viewed as a "free character," without reference to those relationships that impinge upon work performance. Van Maanen (1977) argues that work is not a "closed system, separable in theory and practice from other streams of life" (p. 107). He suggests that qualitative methods, such as participant observation, are necessary to complete the picture of the young worker's experience.

This chapter focuses on attributional processes as they occur in the workplace. From the employer's perspective, attribution processes take place in areas of supervisor assessment and evaluation of new workers. From the youth worker's point of view, attributions are important in the formation of relationships with co-workers, in the interpretation of the actions of significant others in the job setting and, ultimately, in the determination of success or failure in the work environment.

Van Mannen (1977) uses the metaphor of the actor who is learning to play a particular role to explain the manner in which the new employee struggles with the acquisition of the social roles required in the work setting. In this metaphor the workplace is the stage. Until the new worker successfully constructs the parameters of the performance, the role is "incomplete, inauthentic, and detached from all parts" played out by others in the same setting (p. 16). The experiences of the newly employed workers in the Adolescent Worker Study suggest that the metaphor can be extended even further. Like the inexperienced actor, the new hire may inadvertently "upstage" a senior member of the cast. On the other hand, a clever player can skillfully enlarge a "bit" part, garnering individual recognition as well as an improved production, without causing resentment among other members of the company. The future of the entry-level employee, like that of the struggling actor, may well depend upon an ability to improvise. In the theatre one is provided with a script, stage directions, and a director. These tools are not always available in other work settings.

To the observer, however, it appears that some new employees do have a script. Their improvisations are so well synchronized with the movements of the other players that one wonders whether or not they have access to stage directions. In Goffman's (1969) terms, this individual seems to have a "repertoire of face-saving practices" for every contingency, (p. 15). Others are less fortunate. Every move seems calculated to distract. Words and gestures never seem to mesh with those of other, more experienced actors. Even the prescribed move appears awkward, out of place. It is obvious to the audience and to the other actors that this individual does not fit. He or she may know all the right lines, may go through the correct motions, but there is something missing from the performance. Like Goffman's (1969) poorly trained secret agent, this actor is cognitively prepared to play the part, but even an unconscious, barely discernible behavior can demonstrate to the "natives" that this person is not one of them (1969). Faced with this dilemma, the social scientist may be tempted to agree with Miss Piggy, muppet and social commentator, who says, "All the world's a stage--some of us just get better parts!"

Although Miss Piggy's statement may be true, it provides no explanation for the divergent fortunes of newly employed youths. Why, for example, does one new worker seem to know the part before the first rehearsal? Why does another appear out of place and out of character even when the lines and the gestures are technically correct? And most confusing of all, to other novice actors as well as to the observer, why do some employees achieve rave reviews even when their lines are forgotten?

Attribution in the Workplace

Attribution theory may provide one useful framework for interpreting behavior in the workplace. It addresses some apparently contradictory employment decisions and provides a means of understanding the motives of both employers and employees. Through an analysis of attributions one may discern patterns that lie beneath the superficial contradictions. Through attribution theory, it is possible to examine the issues of worker culture, gender, socioeconomic status, age and the effects of these characteristics on employment opportunities. In succeeding sections, examples of behavior recorded in the Adolescent Worker Study are interpreted in light of current attribution literature.

The Adolescent Worker Study is a qualitative investigation that focuses on young persons, between the ages of 17 and 23, as they enter the world of work. The study's procedures include observation of these youths in the work setting and interviews outside of regular work hours. During approx-imately 9 months of investigation, the researcher gradually comes to share the perceptions of the new employee. It is during this initial entry into the work organization that Van Maanen (1977) believes the new worker is "immediately faced with the problem of constructing a definition for the situation" (p. 13). Through these observations we learn how the youths build the social worlds in which their work takes place.

The observations begin with the preliminary training and continue as the new hire becomes an "old hand" in the workplace. For some, the first job is of short duration and the observations continue through termination and, whenever possible, into the next work site. Interviews with the youths and significant others in the work settings provide insight into the world of work from the perspective of the youthful employee. Attribution theory is a useful tool for understanding and analyzing this perspective. It concerns the way new workers make sense of their daily experiences in the work environment.

Heider (1958) refers to the individual as the "naive psychologist" who constantly engages in the process of interpreting one's own behavior and the behavior of others. Emphasis is placed on one's perceptions of the causes of one's own behavior and the behavior of others, not on the actual causes per se. Perceived causes may be ascribed to the actor or to the environment in which one is acting. A central factor is the cognitive process of the perceiver who engages in continual cognitive activity, focusing on understanding, explanation and prediction of ordinary events (see Jones and Nisbett 1972).

In the work site, supervisors and co-workers infer the young worker's intentions from observations of the youth's behavior and judge the youth's ability from job performance. In each instance, there is an observed event, such as a worker action or comment, and an observer judgment concerning the cause of that event. Causation may be attributed to a property that is internal to the person, such as a character trait, or to some element that is external to the person, such as peer pressure or an employer's command. The attributions one

makes about the actions of self and others are important components of social perceptions and self perceptions (see Kelley 1972). Perception is the way the individual experiences the reality of the workplace and is, therefore, an essential factor in the determination of patterns of behavior in that setting. The remainder of this discussion utiiizes specific examples from the Adolescent Worker Study to illustrate the attributional process as it affects the experience of becoming a worker.

Charles
- Job: Sheet metal worker
- Race and Socioeconomic Status: White, lower SES
- Personal: 19 years of age, single, time in reform school
- Education: High school graduate, vocational program
- Work Experience: Mowing lawns, part-time job in same sheet metal shop
- Current Status: Laid off

Dick
- Job: Appliance repair worker
- Race and Socioeconomic Status: White, Appalachian, lower SES
- Personal: 19 years of age, married, 3 children (2 from wife's previous marriage)
- Education: High school graduate, vocational program
- Work Experience: Checkout counter in large discount store
- Current Status: Laid off

Peter
- Job: Appliance repair worker
- Race and Socioeconomic Status: White, middle class SES
- Personal: 19 years of age, single, brother of 7-year employee of same company
- Education: High school graduate, traditional program
- Work Experience: Delivery, hospital maintenance
- Current Status: Still employed

Bob
- Job: Waiter in small restaurant
- Race and Socioeconomic Status: White, middle class SES
- Personal: 18 years of age, single
- Education: High school graduate, college preparatory program
- Work Experience: None
- Current Status: Left two jobs during study, now employed by his father

Figure 1. Characters and their roles in the theatre of work

Jerry
Job: Materials handler in fastener factory
Race and Socioeconomic Status: White, middle class SES
Personal: 18 years of age, single, son of fourteen-year employee at same factory
Education: High school graduate, traditional program
Work Experience: Family-owned tobacco farm
Current Status: Still employed

Figure 1--Continued

The experience of Charles, a new hire in a sheet metal shop, is a good illustration of attributions as they occur in the workplace. When the foreman observes Charles make a measurement error, he wonders "whether he (Charles) cannot read well or simply doesn't pay close attention. In either case, the foreman infers that Charles's behavior is caused by a negative internal trait. On another occasion, the foreman describes the apprentice as "too competitive" because he works "too fast." Again the behavior is attributed to internal dispositions, but this time the terms are relative, that is, the behavior is not perceived as absolutely inappropriate in this setting; it is a question of degree. In this particular case, the foreman's causal inferences concerning Charles's behavior ultimately cost Charles his job, whereas Charles's equally unskilled and inexperienced co-worker retained his position.

Later, Charles reacts by saying, "I don't understand why I got laid off. I'm a good worker." It is hardly surprising that Charles did not understand. Charles views the pace of his work as an asset whereas the foreman interprets his speed as a liability. Both individuals agree on the observed behavior. It is only the inferred cause that differs. How will this experience affect Charles's behavior in his next job? Will he work more slowly and perhaps be accused of loafing? Or will he continue to work at a rapid pace, hoping eventually to find an employer who attributes his speed to ambition? More important, in a broader context than Charles's experience, why do Charles and his foreman make such divergent attributions? Some possible reasons for vastly different attributions are discussed in the following sections.

Divergent Perceptions of Worker and Audience

One explanation for different interpretations of the same behavior is the perspective of the attributor. There is a tendency for the audience, that is, the observer of an action performed by another individual, to attribute that action to stable, internal traits or dispositions of the actor rather than to situational variables (see Jones and Nisbett 1972). Charles, for example, is "too competitive," a phrase that is descriptive of an internal characteristic. His foreman does not perceive Charles's behavior as a response to a situational stimulus, such as the pressure of performing in a new work setting.

Dispositional attributions tend to be chosen by observers, at least in part, because they require less cognitive work than situational attributions. An internal trait of the actor is a simple, straightforward explanation of the behavior (see Jones and Nisbett 1972). Dispositional attributions also eliminate any responsibility for change or further action by the audience/employer (see Shaver 1975). The English language, with its plethora of dispositional adjectives, makes the assignment of internal attributions an easy task. Situational descriptors, on the other hand, are more difficult to find (see Jones and Nisbett 1972).

In the work setting the assignment of dispositional attributions has obvious advantages. If the youth is fired because of alleged laziness, incompetence, or "bad attitude," the supervisor is spared the task of looking beyond the new worker to the work or training site for causes of failure.

Consequently, no change in the setting is required. The successful worker receives credit for being "hard-working," "trainable," and "motivated." Conversely, when the work experience is not positive, when the youth is fired or quits, the actions are attributed to undesirable dispositional characteristics rather than to contextual variables. In practice, this latter process closely parallels "victim blaming" as described by Ryan (1965). The victim, or the fired youth, fails, not because of the situation, but because of an internal, presumably unchangeable trait. The new hire can be fired for being "unmotivated," "slow," or even "creepy." Like the "disadvantaged child" or the woman with "a fear of success," the employee is perceived as deviant. The new hire becomes a candidate for remediation or replacement. The fault lies within the

victim, not the system in which the youth works. The assignment of dispositional attributions protects the system at the expense of the employee who does not fit. In other words, the square peg does not fit into the round hole.

The entire system of employee evaluation presumes the existence of stable, internal traits. The supervisor is charged with identifying those characteristics deemed desirable in a specific work setting. The system presumes that these traits transfer from the school setting to the work setting and from one work setting to the next. These presumptions are the bases for the use of character references or recommendations from previous employers. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the desirability of the dispositional traits varies with the work site. The manager of a fast-food restaurant describes "good personality" as the most essential qualification for an entry-level youth. Skills such as "making change" can be taught on the job." Another restaurant supervisor looks for "hard workers" who are also "friendly," a combination that she believes is hard to find. However, in the sheet metal shop, where interpersonal communication is minimal, the "friendly" employee with the "good personality" may be at a distinct disadvantage. Consequently, the attributions made by the youth's first employer not only determine the degree of success on the first job, but may determine future employment opportunities as well.

If employers are forced to deal with situational attributions in addition to the other demands of the workplace, their task becomes considerably more complex. The cost in terms of time and effort may be far higher than warranted by most entry-level positions. For example, it may be more cost-effective to fire one employee and hire another "who fits in" than to attempt to identify and adjust the situational variables that include senior co-workers.

In the work setting, therefore, there are structural reasons for employers and co-workers to act as "naive psychologists." One is, in effect, building a case for future employment decisions. Without sufficient evidence of internal employee traits, the employer may be prosecuted for firing a new hire. Imagine, for example, the effect of a foreman's admission that a new worker must be fired not because the worker is untrainable, but because the training program is inadequate. Unfortunately, many variables conspire to bias the employer's perception of the causes of a worker's behavior. Once the attribution is

formed, contradictory evidence is easily ignored and supporting evidence quickly accumulated. This is well illustrated by the case of Dick who was fired from his job as a trainee in a repair shop. Among the reasons for his firing are a "bad attitude" and a "lack of priorities." The employer states that both qualities are exemplified by Dick's acquisition of a tattoo shortly after he was hired. Although it is not the sole reason for his firing, the tattoo is cited as proof of Dick's inability to prioritize his financial needs. Ironically, within weeks of Dick's departure, he is replaced by a young man who sports a tattoo!

The dispositional nature of the attributions assigned to new workers, then, is the result of a combination of factors that include the simplicity of the cognitive process and the encouragement of the language which includes numerous dispositional labels. An important benefit of dispositional attributions accrues to the observer in that he or she is relieved of any further responsibility for adjustment or accommodation. Finally, the workplace itself involves assessment and evaluation procedures that are more efficient when applied only to the characteristics of the worker and not to the setting itself.

How does the attributional process work from the perspective of the newly employed youth? Although the language differs, Van Maanen's (1977) account of the new worker's learning experience in "novel surroundings" closely parallels the actor-observer relationship described by Jones and Nisbett (1972). The new hire is not only being observed by others, but is at the same time engaging in active observation and its people. The choices the new worker makes involve this individual's assumptions regarding how others in the organization view this newcomer. The influence others exert over the newcomer is not so much deliberate or coercive, but rather results from the fact that each person must take into account others' expectations when deciding on a course of action. For, consciously or unconsciously, each person performs for some sort of audience. In addition, when a person enters an organization, he must not only orient his performance toward various audiences, but select those audiences to whose judgments he will attach most importance (Van Maanen 1977).

In the language of attribution theory the new worker makes attributions concerning the supervisors, the co-workers, and other personnel and then behaves accordingly. Simultaneously, of course, the "audiences" are observing

the newly employed youth and making attributions which have an impact on future interactions. Like the employer, the young worker tends to make dispositional attributions concerning the behavior of others and then acts upon those beliefs. Those actions affect the outcome of the evaluations which are ultimately utilized for employment decisions.

Self-protection: The Need for Job Security

Research conducted with hypothetical situations suggests that the observer tendency to assign dispositional attributions is intensified with the severity of the consequences of the act (see Wallster 1966). In other words, when the act results in a serious difficulty such as the loss of one's job, the observer is likely to attribute the action to an internal trait of the actor as opposed to situational causation. In the work setting, a severe consequence may be a nega-tive performance review, a reprimand or, worst of all, firing.

In a repair shop, Peter, a new worker, justifies the firing of another youth with the following words:

> Dick was bossy--Trying to do things his way. He wouldn't listen to nobody. He'd say, "No, I am not going to do it that way. I'm going to do it my way," and you just cannot say it like that. Someone like that didn't last long because he was like that. You've got to listen. Everyone helps each other. . . . . One person may know a little bit more about this thing. The other guy might know a little bit more about something else. He couldn't be too bossy and know it all.

Having observed Dick's fate, Peter must place the full responsibility for the failure within Dick in order to maintain a sense of control over his own destiny. If the fault is not Dick's, but is situational, Peter may well be the next victim. It is much less threatening to infer that Dick is solely responsible for being fired and that, ultimately, employees are in control of employment decisions. Peter's need to place the full blame on Dick is especially evident in light of Peter's own earlier admission that he, himself, has been a "know-it-all" in the past. He recounts his own attempt to take a "shortcut," which results in disaster.

> Not too bad, but I just had to do it all over again. It wasn't a matter of me messing them up. It just didn't work so you had to go right back to step one and do it all over again because you thought you could do it a different way and it didn't work.

Although Peter and Dick both attempt to do things their own way, Peter sees Dick's "bossiness" as an internal trait that justified his firing. However, his self-attribution is context dependent. Having made an error in judgment, he is able to correct his behavior by listening to the other men in the shop "because they have been doing it a few years." Peter perceives himself as trainable and able to learn from mistakes, whereas he attributes Dick's behavior to an undesirable and unchangeable internal trait. Peter is becoming a successful worker as he learns from his own mistakes as well as the experiences of others. Peter is also learning about the attributional processes of the workplace; that is, those who fail have no one and nothing to blame but themselves.

Worker Self-Interest and Attributional Bias

By definition, attribution requires inference, that is, causal interpretation based on incomplete or inadequate information. Because the attributor goes beyond the given information, the possibility of bias increases. In the workplace the observed action of the new worker may have positive or negative consequences for observers such as supervisors, senior workers, or other new hires. The consequences can produce attributional bias that Shaver (1975) calls "hedonic relevance." In the following example, there are a number of stakeholders, each of whom has an interest in the outcome of Bob's performance in his new job as a waiter. Each personal interest is accompanied by the possibility of bias.

Recently graduated from high school, Bob is holding a job for the first time. He sees it as a stepping stone to future, more challenging positions. Bob is hired by Marion, the restaurant supervisor, who is also responsible for his training. Marion wants Bob to succeed, not only because it validates her judgment in hiring him, but also because she is accountable to her employer and to his customers for the quality of service in the restaurant. Marion is also responsible for several senior employees who are experienced waitresses. These women share their tasks, and the work load of one individual increases when another is absent or fails to complete a task. Equally important is the fact that tips, which constitute a large part of their weekly wage, reflect the efficiency of the overall operation. If one employee is struggling to deliver

a large order, another worker is expected to assist whenever possible in order to keep things running smoothly during rush periods.

Marion likes Bob and considers him "teachable," although he is "slow moving" and rarely takes the initiative in helping other employees. Bob concentrates on his own station and stands leaning against the counter when his own customers have been served. Like the other employees, Bob has a specific task in addition to waiting tables. He is responsible for the pots and pans. Bob frequently "forgets" to do them. Marion describes Bob as "inexperienced" and "young." Because she likes him, Marion takes extra time to assist him with his work despite complaints from other employees concerning his work habits. In a final effort to help Bob become more productive, Marion outlines Bob's tasks in writing. She asks him to sign a statement which indicates that he understands his duties and realizes that he will be fired if the tasks are not performed satisfactorily. Two days later Bob's father calls during the busy lunch hour to say that Bob has another job. Later, Marion comments, "My pressure may have been too much." She attributes his behavior to immaturity and inexperience.

Bob says he resigned because "the supervisor was always watching me," and because he believes that more was expected of him than of the older, female employees. He attributes Marion's actions to a prejudice against young people, particularly against young males. His father supports him in this belief. Consequently, the actions Marion describes as "extra help" are perceived by Bob as further evidence of her dislike for him and her suspicion that he is not a good worker. In this atmosphere, even the most innocuous remarks are attributed to sinister motives. The interdependence of the restaurant tasks creates an interdependence of consequences that make objective attribution impossible. Whatever they think of Bob as a person, Marion and the waitresses are all working harder due to his actions and, therefore, the probability of bias increases.

In the repair shop, attributional bias also affects employment experiences. Dick, a graduate of a vocational education program designed to prepare him for this job, is criticized for being a "know-it-all." Although Peter, his counterpart, has no prior job-related experience, Peter is the younger brother of Roy, a man whose work is vital to the company that employs them both. It is through Roy that Peter acquires his job. Consequently, supervisor attributions

may be biased by the realization that more is at stake for the company than one entry-level position if Peter is fired or laid off. If Peter were forced to leave, there would, at the very least, be an increase in tension in the small, closely knit company. Eventually, Dick is fired and Peter, although he admits he attempts to do things his "own way," remains.

In both of these settings, the actions of the new workers are interpreted through the biases created by the consequences of their presence or absence on other individuals in the workplace. In Bob's situation the negative consequences of his work on co-workers and supervisor may well have intensified their vigilance in spotting his mistakes. The same may be true of Dick. On the other hand, Peter's supervisors have more to gain by ignoring his errors and emphasizing his assets. In all three instances, the task of becoming a worker is complicated by the needs and wants of others in the work environment.

Bias Due to Perceived Similarities and Differences

As the foregoing discussion implies, attributions in the work setting can be inaccurate for one or a complex combination, of several reasons. The examples of work site observations illustrate the importance of the attributions to the young worker whose employment future may well be determined by the causal inferences of significant others in the work setting. In each case it is apparent that the attributions are not simple, one-dimensional judgments. In an effort to account for both the complexity and incompleteness of the information on which attributions are made, Kelley (1967) proposes a model that closely resembles the scientist's analysis of variance approach to problem solving.

In every situation, the attributor has access to three types of information, each of which represents a different causal possibility. The first is "consensus information." Consensus information tells the attributor whether or not other persons behave in the same way when confronted with the same stimulus. For example, when the regular supervisor is absent, does this worker and do other workers engage in horseplay? The second type of data is "distinctiveness" information that indicates whether or not this individual and other individuals respond in the same way when confronted with other stimuli. Again,

using horseplay as the example, does this worker and do other workers engage in horseplay when the regular supervisor is present? The third and final type is "consistency" information, which indicates whether this worker and other workers respond in the same way to the given stimulus across time and situational contexts. Does this employee and do other employees engage in horseplay during break time? On the ball field? In the quality circle meeting? On the work floor? The answers to these questions permit the at-tributor to determine whether the worker under consideration is like other workers or deviates from the acceptable norm.

Every individual in the work setting, including the new hire and the employer, has a unique history of life experience. When all three types of information aforementioned are not available, attributors use their own experience as the normative data to fill in the gaps. For example, the new hire who has encountered such horseplay only with groups of children may attribute it to immaturity or to lack of seriousness. Jerry who is 18 years of age and the youngest worker in a large manufacturing plant says of his first work experience, "I thought I would have to act older; instead I had to go back to being thirteen." In the same setting the floor supervisors and long-time employees perceive the horseplay as a "normal" part of the work scene. The new worker who cannot adjust to this expectation does not fit into the work environment.

The process of interpreting the work environment in relation to what the individual perceives as normal and proper is described by Van Maanen (1977). He believes that the individual's concept of "normal" is the result of previous experiences in other settings. Values concerning what is appropriate or correct in a given situation depend upon the individual's prior life experiences. To the extent that the employer's personal history resembles that of the employee, there is a better chance that the employer will have accurate information to guide his appraisal. The reverse is also true; when the employee is observing the behavior of others, the accuracy increases as the perceived similarity between the actor and the observer increases. In other words, accurate causal inferences are more likely when the employer and employee perceive themselves to be alike in terms of socioeconomic background, culture, gender, age, race, religion, and other demographic characteristics.

Marion, a white, female supervisor with over 26 years of experience addresses this issue when she speaks of the problems she encounters in trying to hire black employees:

> When we opened I hired 50 percent black employees. Now there is only one black man left and I don't think he will stay much longer. This is probably a prejudice, but I think we have different cultural values. That's not to say the values are good or bad, just different.

Marion elaborates, detailing an example of a former black, male employee who spent several days at the hospital bedside of a distant relative when he was also needed at the restaurant. Marion is unable to comprehend his choice: I think his values are probably better than mine, but I had to keep the place running.

It is impossible to say whether or not the employee would have retained his job if his culture had been similar to that of his supervisor, but clearly Marion perceives the cultural differences as an issue. Marion is unique only in that she recognizes the impact that cultural differences have in the work setting. A more frequent occurrence is the firing of an employee who is not perceived as different but as deficient.

Many of the participants in the Adolescent Worker Study obtain their jobs through contact with close friends or family members. To the extent that these individuals share a "family" culture, it is reasonable to expect that some similarities exist that enable employers and co-workers to make more accurate attributions involving these new hires. This assumption is supported by the fact that the individuals who acquired jobs through family connections are less likely to have been fired or laid off.

The advantage of family culture in the work world is vividly illustrated by the experience of Peter. Although he has no previous experience in repair work, his "brother talked them into hiring" Peter in the repair shop where his brother has been employed for the past 7 years. Peter says that although they are rarely in the same room, his brother's presence on the premises made Peter "feel more comfortable" even on the first day of work. Senior employees, including the shop owners, joke with Peter, making friendly remarks about Peter's disagreements with his girl friend and kidding him about coming to work with a hangover. Peter is entrusted with special tasks that implies a degree of

trust, such as taking an owner's truck to the car wash during a slow period in the shop. Peter believes that his fellow employees "probably feel more at ease" with him because they have known his brother for such a long time. The fact that two new hires have come and gone since Peter's arrival seems to support his claim.

Marion, the restaurant supervisor, provides another example of the advantages inherent in hiring members of the same family. She believes that she achieves her best results by hiring "somebody who knows somebody else." Marion frequently hires relatives of proven, long-time employees and is "rarely" disappointed. She relates the story of Jack, a young man whose unkempt appearance and difficulties with the law made him a less-than-desirable candidate for a job opening. Despite Marion's initial doubts, she hired him on the recommendation of his sister, a reliable employee. Since that time, Jack has been promoted more than once and is considered a valued employee. Without Marion's attribution of a value system similar to that of his sister, Jack might never have had the opportunity to prove himself.

Believing that "birds of a feather flock together," Marion hires individuals who associate with persons of "good moral character." A person of deep religious conviction, Marion also acts on the recommendations of those who suggest that a fellow church member be hired. To Marion the specific church denomination is not important. However, the church serves as a frame of reference. She can apply what she knows about the value of the known church to the unknown applicant. The practice of making attributions based on religious affiliation is an informal employment practice that is well documented by Powell (1969). On the basis of a 5 year participant observation, as well as interviews regarding perceptions of workers and their religious beliefs, Powell concludes that one's religion does exert an indirect influence on one's employment because "it forms the basis of association," as well as opportunities for social relationships.

In summary, the new worker may encounter individuals who use their own background to complete the attribution puzzle. In effect, these persons assume that their own experiences are the norm and can, therefore, be applied accurately to everyone else. The more like each other the new hire and the employer are alike, the more likely it is that the background data of one will

match the other and, therefore, the more likely it is that the attributions will be accurate.

Stereotyping Young Workers

In some instances attributions are made concerning individuals even prior to the initial encounter. In order to gain a greater sense of control over the environment, persons make casual inferences about others with whom they anticipate interaction (see Yarkin-Levin 1983). An interviewer may read a job application and begin to form a judgment of the youth on the basis of a few demographic characteristics such as gender and surname. The inferences are based on such incomplete information that they are actually stereotypes. The employer may announce to other workers that a new hire is expected. If the individual's gender, race and educational level are mentioned, important assumptions are already being made by the workers. Those assumptions may have a significant impact on future interactions. In the repair shop, for example, the employees are aware of Dick's graduation from a vocational program. They do not see this as an asset but as proof that Dick is "too dumb" to pass the traditional high school curriculum. This belief persists even when it is learned that his program specifically prepared him for the job he has been hired to do. The following excerpt from a field observation illustrates the effect of this stereotype on Dick's interactions in the shop. Like Dick, Peter is a new employee. Peter has no prior experience or training in repair work.

> Frank (the supervisor) returns to assist Dick while Peter adjusts two gauges on the wall. Peter pauses, then turns to Dick and asks, "Do you turn these counterclockwise?" Dick hesitates for 2 or 3 seconds and then answers, "Yes." Tom, another em-ployee, moves closer to Peter at that moment and Peter repeats his question, "Do you turn these counterclockwise?" Tom says, "Yes", and Peter continues to adjust the dials.

Unsatisfied with the response from the "dummy," Peter seeks a more authoritative source. Dick's interactions in the work site are interpreted in light of this stereotype and eventually his employment is jeopardized. Months after he is fired, he is still referred to as the "dummy." His name becomes the derogatory label that is applied to anyone who makes what the others perceive to be a stupid mistake.

In the same workplace, a conversation among the male employees concerned women and the types of work they can do. In this setting the only female was the secretary and the repair work was performed only by men. A comment by George demonstrates the manner in which gender stereotypes determine casual inferences in the work environment: "I know one in construction. She worked harder than most of the guys. I think she was trying to prove something." One can only imagine how an announcement of a female employee in the repair shop would be received by these men. Throughout the observations, similar stereotypical comments are made concerning the anticipated behavior of customers identified as "hillbillies," "Jewish people," "colored people," and the inhabitants of nearly every suburb of the city in which the shop is located. The stereotypes are so ingrained that experienced workers relate prescribed methods of interacting with customers of various ethnic groups to the new hires.

Level of Analysis of Attributions in the Work Setting

As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, the attributions of significant others in the workplace can affect the success or failure of the youth who is becoming a worker. Casual inferences made by superiors and co-workers determine the patterns of interaction experienced by the newly employed worker. Ultimately, such attributions can become self-fulfilling prophecies for the youths who perceive themselves as winners or as losers in the marketplace. For the young worker, then, it is imperative that the attributional process be as accurate as possible. Significant others in the work environment tend to make dispositional attributions concerning the new workers, while the workers themselves are more likely to consider the impact of situational variables on their behavior. For some this discrepancy is synonymous with inaccuracy. However, according to Funder (1982), such an assumption is incorrect. He argues that the real difference between dispositional and situational attribution is not degree of accuracy, but "level of analysis." To some extent, every behavior is situationally caused in that it is, at least to some degree, a response to the environment, including the persons in the work setting. So too, every behavior is somewhat dispositionally caused in that workers do things differently from one another.

Moreover, either sort of attribution can usually be made to regress to the other. If it is concluded that someone behaved in response to a situation, it

can then be asked what dispositional factors in the person led him or her to respond to the situation in that way, rather than in some other way. If it is concluded that someone's behavior was influenced by a dispositional factor, it can still usually be noted that the behavior was manifested in response to some situation (see Finder 1977, p. 216).

Analyzed in this manner, dispositional and situational attributions need not be perceived as mutually exclusive. The "naive psychologist" becomes, in Finder's (1977) words, "a thoughtful lay perceiver" who takes into consideration both dispositional and situational influences in explaining the behavior of self and others. The choice of emphasis is dependent upon the goals of the attributor. The employer or personnel director who attempts to predict job performance may choose to organize information in terms of stable dispositions which the worker demonstrates under specific work conditions. In effect, the attributors perform the same task as the social scientist who utilize naturalistic research methods--they consider the new worker in the context of the work environment, not as a free agent who is disassociated from the work site.

Implications

At present, very little research focuses on the nature and importance of attributions in the work setting. As this chapter demonstrates, however, the process of attribution and the factors that affect it have far-reaching consequences for the young worker. Additional research is needed to identify all of the forces contributing to the formation of causal inferences in the marketplace.

A better understanding of contextual variables and their impact on worker behavior may alter the assessment and evaluation of candidates for employment by shifting the emphasis from stable dispositional characteristics to situation specific behaviors. Such modifications have ramifications for the employer, the job seeker, and the worker who is under consideration for promotion. In all these cases, the impact of the work environment is equally as important as the internal dispositions of the individuals involved.

Employers may discover that the employment practices and the work environments, not the workers, are problematic. Where stereotypical expectations and cross-cultural misunderstandings contribute to discrimination multicultural

awareness and human relations strategies can have an impact on equality of opportunity. Multicultural awareness in the training and assessment of young workers is one essential means of easing the school-to-work transition for many. To encourage our teachers to grapple with the demands of education in a pluralistic society seems a futile enterprise when their students graduate into a workplace that is overwhelmingly dominated by the values and expectations of the white, male, middle-class work ethic.

The application of attribution theory to the social organization of the work setting is one of many opportunities for educators to have an impact on the industrial setting. It can provide one means of creating a two-way flow of information between education and industry, instead of the current one-way trend from industry to the schools.

Most important, the application of attribution theory has benefits for the individual worker. So much of our current knowledge is rooted in the perceptions of employers and experienced workers that we rarely see the work site through the eyes of the newly employed youth. There is a need, as Van Maanen (1977) argues, for the kind of qualitative data that enable us to see the "social reality" of the work world as the young worker sees it (1977). Attribution theory provides a framework through which the new worker can gain self-understanding as well as insight into the actions and reactions of employers and co-workers. By understanding the perceptions of others and the factors that affect those perceptions, youthful workers increase their probability of success in the work setting. Given the tendency for the attributions of significant others to become self-fulfilling prophecies for the young person (Bar-Tal 1979; Harvey and Weary 1981), such knowledge can prevent the youth from blaming himself or herself for failures that have little or no relationship to real performance or to future potential in alternative work settings. This realization is especially critical in light of evidence that "cognitive systems pertinent to achievement motivation may be learned differentially by various racial and social class groupings" (Bar-Tal 1979, p. __). Although it is not yet conclusive, the research suggests that in educational settings both blacks and females may perform below their abilities because of attributional patterns that differ from those of most white males. Further research is necessary to determine whether or not this is true of job training situations as well. If so, change is necessary to equalize the opportunities for those populations

traditionally excluded from upper-level management positions. For too long, these groups have been "waiting in the wings." Now that they have gained access to the stage, it is time that they have the opportunity for the "better parts" as well.

REFERENCES

Bar-Tal, D. "Interactions of Teachers and Pupils." In New Approaches to Social Problems, edited by I.H. Frieze, D. Bar-Tal, and J.S. Carroll. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979.

Funder, David C. "On the Accuracy of Dispositional versus Situational Attributions. Social Cognition 1, no. 3 (1982): 205-222.

Goffman, Erving. International Ritual. Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969.

_____.

Strategic Interaction. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967.

Harvey, John H., and Weary, G. Perspectives on Attributional Processes. Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown Co., 1981.

Heider, F. The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958.

Jones, E. E., and Nisbett, R. E. "The Actor and the Observer: Divergent Perceptions of the Causes of Behavior. In Attribution: Perceiving the Causes of Behavior, edited by E. E. Jones, D. E. Kanouse, H. H. Kelley, R. E. Nisbett, S. Valins, and B. Weiner. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1972.

Kelley, H. H. "Attribution in Social Interaction." In Attribution: Perceiving the Causes of Behavior, edited by E. E. Jones, D. E. Jones, D. E. Kanouse, H. H. Kelley, R. E. Nisbett, S. Valins, and B. Weiner, Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1972.

_____. "Attribution Theory in Social Psychology." In Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, edited by D. Levine. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1967.

Powell, Reed M. Race, Religion and the Promotion of the American Executive. Columbus: The Ohio State University, 1969.

Ryan, W. Blaming the Victim. New York: Random House, 1976.

Shaver, K.G. An Introduction to Attributional Processes. Cambridge, England: Winthrop, 1975.

Van Maanen, J. Organizational Careers: Some New Perspectives. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977.

Wallster, E. "Assignment of Responsibility for an Accident." In Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3 (1966): 73-79.

Yarkin-Levin, K. "Anticipated Interaction, Attribution, and Social Interaction." In Social Psychology Quarterly 46 (December 1983): 302-311.

CHAPTER 5

by

FITTING INTO A JOB: LEARNING THE PACE OF WORK

Kathryn M. Borman

Both schools and workplaces, according to Van Maanen (1971), are negotiating environments where teachers and trainers attempt to shape the behavior, skills, and attitudes of students and new workers. This view emphasizes the importance of social interaction or negotiation in achieving membership in people-oriented organizational settings.

As agencies of cultural transmission, schools and workplaces have several features in common. Both attempt to establish control over inexperienced members of the group but are less successful with some individuals than with others in achieving compliance with organizational goals and standards. Schools suffer the loss of disaffected students who leave school for a variety of reasons. Workplaces apparently have difficulty retaining young workers who constitute the disproportionately largest group of job leavers in society (Borus et al. 1983).

Both schools and workplaces inculcate specific skills viewed from the organization's perspective as appropriate for handling the task at hand. These skills are related to the governing technologies in each organization. In the school, formal descriptions of the curriculum include reference to literacy and computing skills at particular grade levels. In the workplace, training manuals list skills and abilities associated with degrees of proficiency in performing specific tasks such as processing statements in a bank or turning an elbow in a sheet metal shop or even shelving stock in a supermarket.

Finally, both have unofficial but highly important informal programs designed to indoctrinate the student or workplace recruit into the organization's routine. In schools these programs are referred to as "citizenship training," cooperative learning, career education, and the like. They exist alongside and complement the "hidden curriculum," that system of values and behaviors that

---

Acknowledgement: The author gratefully acknowledges helpful comments provided by William T. Pink on an earlier draft of this chapter.

ensures things move along on schedule and with minimal difficulty. In workplaces, similar programs are spoken of as "induction," "orientation," "initiation," or "breaking-in". Lessons learned from these unofficial agendas in both the school and the workplace probably carry over from these settings and affect interaction in family, community, and other institutions and thus assume considerable importance in the daily lives of individuals.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to analyze informal learning processes in the workplace by providing illustrations of one dimension of cultural transmission, learning the pace of work. The pace of work refers to what Roy (1959-1960) in his study of worker relations in a machine shop setting called "a patterned combination of horseplay, serious conversation, and frequent sharing of food and drink to reduce the monotony of simple repetitive operations to the point where the regular schedule of the long workday became bearable." Roy, who worked as a die cutter during his research, initially developed a series of mental games and later became a partner in the ritualized verbal exchanges of his co-workers. Roy's accommodation to the pace of work took a developmental course over 2-3 months' time. At first he concocted a series of games in which he mentally manipulated the shapes and colors of the plastic and leather dies. Later he used breaks such as scraping the block, going to the lavatory or getting a drink of water to vary the routine. Finally, when he had developed some rapport with his co-workers, Roy entered the complex rituals of "banana time," "peach time," and "Coke time" to regulate the pace of work. He discovered that conversation during these events had a thematic quality; jokes about one worker's relationship with his wife and another's status as the father-in-law of a professor enforced a pecking order among the workers. His workplace relationships had evolved into an easy but highly structured interactional system. After 3 months, Roy was well integrated into the machine shop culture.

Learning the pace of work requires the novice worker to gain an understanding of at least three highly complex and interrelated components of workplace culture: management culture, work culture, and task technology. In a later section of the chapter will focus primarily on the second of these--work culture--although management culture will also be considered. A discussion of

task technology, the "nuts and bolts" of processing bank statements, repairing air conditioners, and the like, is beyond the scope of this chapter. The interest is in illustrating the different patterns of social learning available to young workers in different job settings. It will be argued that along with characteristics of the job setting, characteristics of young workers, particularly gender, profoundly affect these patterns. Young women seem particularly handicapped by virtue of their more circumscribed opportuni-ties for social interaction of any kind in clerical and routine service jobs that they typically hold. Before turning to this analysis, methodological issues associated with studying processes of cultural transmission in workplace settings will be examined.

Work Place Studies of Cultural Transmission

In contrast to the large volume of qualitative studies in school settings, there have been very few studies of cultural transmission in the workplace. For the most part, these studies can be seen as related to school ethnographies in substance and method. The primary emphasis in the following discussion will be on the substantive findings of the research to be worker socialization employing a case study and observational approach have emphasized the central importance of management's control of the labor process as the key to understanding social relations in production. Interest in the labor process specifically and in the sphere of production generally can be traced to Braverman's (1974) analysis of the degradation of work under capitalism, although Braverman himself used traditional labor economics models as opposed to ethnographic investigation to frame his work. According to Braverman, in a capitalist economy, disparate social relations between owners and workers are strengthened and hardened by the "massification of labor." This concept refers to the prevailing pattern of cooperation on the shop or office floor by ordinary workers.

Labor processes include not only production of commodities as in Burawoy's (1979) study of die cutters in a machine shop (1979), but also include the efforts of "mental" laborers, for example, clerical workers in office settings (Valli 1983). Burawoy's research was carried out some 30 years after Roy's study in the same Chicago die cutting shop. At the time of Burawoy's research in 1975, the shop had become part of a larger, more diversified operation.

After his initial observations as a machine operator, Burawoy's central concern was to explain the game of "making out," the effort by workers to achieve levels of production surpassing the 100 percent requirement in order to earn incentive pay. The ceiling established throughout the shop was 140 percent. This figure represented the informal agreement between labor and management and in particular reflected management's concern that turning in more work resulted in rate increases or "price cuts." What Burawoy (1979) discovered is that workers systematically turned out more than this amount but devised strategies for investing or reserving "surplus" production.

Clearly, in order to maintain the system of making out, workers needed to establish relationships with co-workers and with their immediate supervisors, the shop foremen. Foremen were empowered to grant "double red cards" when machinery in the shop failed or when materials were temporarily unavailable to production workers. These cards covered the time lost by these workers through failures and delays at a rate of 125 percent. There was a good deal of negotiation that accompanied signing a red card with such bargaining chips as permission to go home early, to attend union meetings, or to have "casual days" in return for better than 100 percent effort when the work crew was faced with a "hot job." According to Burawoy's observations, before the red card was signed, "the operator has to persuade the foreman that he has made an earnest attempt to make out and therefore deserves compensation" (Burawoy 1982). The intriguing aspect to these negotiations is that "rules promulgated by high levels of plant management are circumvented, ignored, or subverted on the shop floor with the tacit and sometimes active support of the foreman, in the interests of making out" (Burawoy 1979).

Although he was initially "contemptuous" of the game of making out because "it appeared to advance . . . [the company's] profit margins more than the operators' interests," Burawoy ultimately found himself "spontaneously cooperating with management in the production of greater surplus value: in large part because the social relations of the shop floor were so highly dependent on one's status in the process of making out (Burawoy 1979). Thus, Burawoy contends that the labor process itself, not attitudes and patterns of behavior that workers bring into the shop, guide processes of interaction in the shop. In other words, the organization of work is constructed through the relations of shop floor workers.

Valli's (1983) study of young clerical workers describes the school-to-work transition for participants in a clerical work-study program. Like Burawoy, Valli was struck by the lack of an easy fit between demands for appropriate "work dispositions" and the actual behavior and attitudes of office-work interns. Valli's study makes the connection between school and workplace particularly vivid. It contrasts with other studies that, although concerned with the school-to-work transition, are quite distant from either school or workplace processes by virtue of the research questions asked and the research approaches used (see, for example, Bowles and Gintis 1976; Rumberger 1983). These earlier studies, informed by labor market theory in economics, assume an easy correspondence between the repressive process of work-related activity in workplaces and those found in the school. However, in order to study social relations in any setting it is critical that the researcher be sensitive to everyday practices. Drawing upon the earlier, conceptually similar work of Paul Willis (1977), Valli (1983) states the rationale for close, observational accounts of the reproduction of social relations in schools and work settings:

> The reproduction of work relations must cue the reproduction of consciousness, subjectivity and cultural forms; it must draw upon everyday practices to explain not only how social relations are reproduced, but how they are (potentially) contested and transformed as well. (Valli 1983 p. 7)

In her observations of both settings, Valli was struck by the fact that although the classroom teacher, Mrs. Lewis, stressed the importance of improving rates of productivity to ensure that her students would receive good work appraisals, her rather offhand and disorganized approach to classroom activity management gave the students a contradictory message. She did little to check the pace at which tasks were completed because she was confronted by a number of administrative chores that often took her away from the classroom. Students, left unguided in the classroom, were frequently heard by Valli to complain of boredom and exasperation in the face of the lack of structure and supervision. Even when the teacher was present in the classroom, activities frequently bore little relationship to the office work skills that formed the basis for the official curriculum of the course:

> Seldom were the 40 minutes scheduled actually utilized for teaching and learning purposes. When students were in class, they often (with or without Mrs. Lewis) talked about such matters as

losing weight, dating, drinking, buying clothes, cheerleading activities or other such social matters. Although they sometimes engaged in such conversations at work, the major difference was that at school, they were not simultaneously involved in the accomplishement of a work assignment (Valli 1983).

Thus, the classroom setting contrasted with the work setting where "casual" conversation was interspersed with the job-related activity but did not replace it. In the work setting, conversation functioned to regulate the pace of work, whereas in the classroom, it often became the primary activity, subverting the pace of work in that context.

Management Culture and Work Culture

In work settings, groups of co-workers collaborate to control the pace of work despite the existence of a hierachy of authority that invests management with the right to establish rules governing the work process (see chapter 7 of this publication). Although there is an identifiable management culture, it remains relatively remote from the daily lives of ordinary workers.

Management culture stresses efficiency and effectiveness in getting the work accomplished in line with the formal authority structure of the workplace. The manager of a sheet metal shop, a job setting in the Adolescent Worker Study, stressed the importance of both technical skills and informal work rules in his assesment of new employee's productivity:

> The key to working in our sheet metal shop is can a student count and can a student follow instructions? . . . When they are instructed to get four pieces of a certain type of metal, they should be able to go and know where the right metal is, and get it. They should know how to cut it and do what is necessary for that piece of metal.

Although the emphasis is upon productivity, management may recognize that there are constraints on effective performance. In the case of the sheet metal shop, the manager allowed that not only was the work "tedious," "repetitive," and "very boring," but that in his role as supervisor, he typically does not "ever really make it completely clear what we expect from them." Thus, although managers may acknowledge difficulties inherent in negotiating new work roles for young employees, managers appear to hold very closely to an ideology that stresses productive output in line with legitimate demands flowing from a

distant but authoritative source. By not making expectations for job performance particularly clear, management tacitly transfers the task of breaking in new workers to their co-workers and line supervisors. Thus, new workers become initiated in a work culture rather than a management culture.

Work culture is less visible to the observer than management culture that is often broadcast in the form of slogans and prescriptive memoranda and is thus submitted down the line in written, codified form. Moreover, the new worker is likely to see workplace culture initially as barren in content except for the technology involved in doing the job--for example, cutting sheet metal forms in the shop, batch processing overdraft statements in the bank, or taking inventory in the appliance repair shop. Cultural learning occurs in two important dimensions of the learning process. The first of these, as recognized by Wolcott (1982), was that all learners, like children acquiring lang-uage, engage in active participation in the learning process. They thereby take on what might be called the "informal logic of actual life" (Gerta quoted by Wolcott). The second dimension, described by Moore (1984), reflects a kind of scaffolding process by which the learners and the trainers (i.e., co-workers and line supervisors) together construct a framework. To this framework learners gradually add more and more bits to complete an increasingly elaborate, complex structure of workplace knowledge. The essential aspects are twofold: active participation and negotiated construction of workplace knowledge. Thus, the interactional nature of cultural transmission is fundamental to learning the work culture.

In considering the culture of work, it is important to clarify what is meant by the concept. Work culture can be defined as a "relatively autonomous sphere of action on the job, a realm of informal, customary values and rules which mediate the formal authority structure of the workplace and distance the workers from its impact" (Benson) quoted in Apple, forthcoming). Work culture is not only a buffer against management culture, it constitutes a relatively autonomous "sphere of action" constructed by the activity of the workers.

Apple persuasively argues that work culture is bolstered by norms that develop in specific work sites in various organizations. These norms provide workers with considerable autonomy and control. The institutionalization of "banana time," "peach time," Coke time," and other breaks in the clicking room

allowed Roy and his co-workers to manage the pace of their work. The significance of these brief breaks throughout the day became apparent when an altercation between two of the men temporarily shattered the social harmony and the pace of work in the clicking room. The breaks, as well as the banter that accompained them, no longer occurred. Workers, fatigued and irritable, left their jobs physically exhausted and angry. Moreover, production declined as less work was accomplished despite an unremittingly constant pace of work. Later, when harmonious relations had been restored, the pace of work once again became synchronous with the physical and psychological capacities of the workers. The important point here is that workers, not managers, regulated the flow of production.

In the Adolescent Worker Study, we observed an analogous case in a hospital setting. Workers whom we observed in the hospital cafeteria discussed the possibility of not accepting an order from staff in labor and delivery who habitually placed orders just as food service staff were in the process of turning off the grill, closing work stations, and cleaning up late in their evening shift. Although we did not observe them carrying out this threat, their conversation illustrates that these workers are clearly aware of the power they have to regulate the flow of their own work.

The Longitudinal Field Study of Adolescent Workers

Given the existence of a work culture, the question arises as to which aspects of the culture seem especially crucial in mediating management's norms of productivity and authority. In examining the initiation of new, inexperienced young workers into the cultural stream of the workplace, what evidence do we have that work norms are, in fact, gradually being acquired, particularly with respect to learning the pace of work? Correspondingly, what evidence is there to suggest that these norms are acquired in the context of work culture as opposed to a management culture? These are the questions that guide the analysis in this chapter.

Work sites employing the young workers in the study were varied and eventually included approximately 90 different settings over a representative range of industrial sectors (Borman and Reisman, forthcoming). The four sites to be considered in this chapter include two major banks, one in each city; an ap-

pliance repair and sales shop; and a fastener factory, the world's largest producer of industrial staples. These particular sites and the experiences of the young workers within them were selected for analysis here because they readily provide contrasting and comparative pictures of cultural transmission. There is also sufficient documentation in these cases of workplace learning processes because in each case we were able to remain in the setting for at least 9 months. In no case did we spend less than 20 hours of observation at the workplace, and in 1 case, field notes included more than 50 hours of observational time.

Observational accounts began with the first day the new worker was on the job or on the day closest to that day. The bulk of the data to be analyzed here is in the form of field notes taken during work site observations. These field notes were later transcribed, typed, and their content analyzed. Additional data sources include work history interviews, current events interviews conducted periodically during the course of the study, and life history interviews conducted toward the end of the study.

These settings and the unfolding lives of the young workers within them were, as mentioned previously, particularly rich in comparative and contrasting detail as is clear from the four sets of analyses that follow. The analyses are organized as individual case studies. In a following section, themes and questions that are important to consider with respect to the contents of workplace learning, particularly with reference to learning the pace of work will be discussed.

Betty: Customer Inquiry Representive, Midland Bank

Betty began her part-time job at the downtown headquarters of a major bank by attending an orientation for new employees hired throughout the firm. The orientation began at 9:00 a.m. after all new workers had been photographed and fingerprinted for the bank's personnel files. The orientation was designed to provide a picture of the bank's employee benefits program, organizational structure, and evaluation, promotion, and reward schemes. During the course of this presentation, new workers learned whom they should regard as their trainers and supervisors. Indeed, the organization's structure was portrayed primarily in terms of the individuals who were in charge of the various bank

units. As the trainer flashed a slide picturing the "key people" comprising the staff in Betty's unit, the customer inquiry department, she remarked, "Listen to Jeanne . . . [the department supervisor] . . . smart lady, you'll learn a lot from her." In this manner, the organization's view of the process of learning and cultural transmission on the job was made explicit to the new recruits.

In explaining the salary structure for employees in the bank, the orientations officer stated, "In considering your grade level and hourly rate, we compare job responsibilities, not just job titles." She went on to display a transparency showing the range of salaries available to hourly personnel and others employed at the bank saying, "You can't pay the teller as much as much as you would a manager because he or she has a college education, manages 25-50 employees, and has more responsibility." Thus, the lines between ordinary workers such as Betty and managers such as Jeanne were made explicit both with respect to function (trainer and managers with more responsibility than ordinary workers) and wages (trainers and managers with regular, higher sala-ries than part-time and hourly workers).

The evaluation process was described as "the way you rise up the payroll scale." The categories for evaluation included job knowledge--"how well you know and understand your job"; quality of work; quantity of work; dependability; resourcefulness; attitude and cooperation with co-workers; and customer relations, including not only "how well you get along with customers," but also "how well you dress." New employees were told that they would be given a rating of 1-5 on each of the dimensions and an overall rating. During their initial 30-90 days on the job, they would not be eligible for a salary increase, but would be suject to termination if they failed to maintain at least a rating of 2 on all dimensions. Each of the rating categories was then referenced with a statement regarding the probability for a pay increase associated with each of the rating categories.

At another orientation meeting later the same day, Betty met with her two immediate supervisors, Nancy and Vera. During this ses-sion involving only those new workers hired in the customer inquiry department, Nancy and Vera reviewed policies covering salaries and procedures. Time sheets, procedures for taking sick leave, the salary schedule, and training procedures were all described. Attendance, including policies governing tardi-ness, absences, and

breaks received most of the attention in the supervisors' remarks. Workers were told they would be continued on probation beyond the usual 6-month period if they were late or absent more than 4 times during the initial 6-month period.

The rest of the meeting was focused on how new workers would be affected by the training period. Each day over a 3-week period new customer reps were told that they would be quizzed on aspects of the bank's policies and procedures including methods for taking sick days as well as procedures for handling customer queries. Quizzes were administered following a period for study and review of assigned material. Trainees were expected to achieve a score of 85 percent or better on quizzes. The first day's quiz, for example, covered knowledge of the organization's key people. Trainees were given time on the job to review and study for these quizzes; however, they were also instructed to take about an hour and a half at home to review and consolidate their understanding of the material.

The final piece of information given to these new workers during their initial department meeting concerned the Star System, the computerized monitoring device used by the bank to supervise and regulate the flow of work. This system provided information to assist managers in scheduling Betty and her co-workers to cover periods of greater or lesser volumes of work during the course of the day. The major task handled by Betty and her co-workers in their jobs as customer representatives was to answer incoming calls from customers who typically wished to find out the balance in a checking or savings account, determine the reason for an overdraft charge, or stop payment on a check. The bank's computing system recorded the number of telephone calls handled during the course of the work day by individual employees, the length of each call, the number and length of pauses in individual conversations with customers, and the like. Based on previously analyzed similar information, supervisors in Betty's department developed performance standards covering the pace of work. The new workers were told that representatives were expected to handle 26 calls per hour.

Midland Bank provided the most highly detailed picture of its expectations for new employees of any business in the study. Moreover, it had certainly the most sophisticated technology imaginable in place to monitor the pace of work. A month after she had been hired, Betty was perceived by her immediate supervisors as doing well, primarily because of her skill in handling difficult customers. Frequently, Betty and other customer representatives received angry calls from customers whose plastic cards had disappeared into the bank's automated check-cashing machines or whose accounts had been assessed as an unfamiliar charge by the bank. According to Betty's supervisor, her "quality of service" in these cases was exceptional.

The pace of work, particularly the volume of telephone calls handled each hour by Betty and the other reps, was expected to increase over the first 6 months of employment. Vera put it this way:

> We have a requirement of 22-26 calls an hour. They . . . [the representatives] start anywhere from 15-18 the first month, then they go up to 19-20. So it's not something we expect immediately. We give them a good 6 months to really get ahead because the more confidence they get, naturally, the more times they are plugged in
> . . . . They are going to get these calls promptly. If they know the job, and naturally, gradually, once they learn everything, it [i.e., the pace of work] . . . will pick up.

Calls were distributed among the five or six representatives on the floor by an automated distributor. During the first 6 months on the job, Betty and her new co-workers were monitored on a regular basis by any 1 of 3 immediate supervisors who, through the bank's computerized Star System, could undetected by the representatives, listen in on telephone conversations whenever they wished. According to one of these supervisors, this method of monitoring different kinds of information:

> In monitoring, we pick up different things such as the type of call, her answer to the call, the content of a call, the timing, her voice, tone, the service she gives. Then we have what we call a miscellaneous . . . [category] such as using correct procedures.

In addition to providing accurate accounting information and the like, "correct procedures" included other components such as gaining proper identification

from the customer before providing information, maintaining an "appropriate" number of conversational pauses, and the like, as described by Betty's supervisor:

> We, as a bank, naturally are confidential so we don't give our information [to just anyone]. Customers have to identify their account, and our branches have to give a code that we set up or we don't give them any information at all. Also, we monitor out calls--whether they are personal or business. After hang up time, we also put on . . . [the rating sheet] whether they are filling out forms, if there is unnecessary talk, or if they are just idle.

Although Betty was perceived by all three supervisors as "exceptional" after little more than 1 month on the job, they only mentioned her skill with irate customers and her ability to handle the technical details of the job as indicators of her "exceptional" skills. Further, they were reluctant to give her an overall rating of anything over a 3, indicating performance was "acceptable." This they explained by saying that Betty was still asking questions of her supervisors when certain issues came up.

At her telephone where she spent her day, Betty had access to a computerized fund of customer account information. However, when the computer was "down," as it usually was for some part of each work day, Betty was forced to use microfiche cards. Microfiche data were typically incomplete and frequently did not provide the most recent account activity. Thus, information regarding overdrawn accounts, stop payments, and the like could not be accurately provided during the time the computer was not working. Representatives, including Betty, were cautioned not to tell customers that the computer was unavailable lest customers develop a lack of confidence in the bank. A frequently occurring theme in Betty's occasional asides to her co-workers concerned the difficulties of handling customer queries and problems with the insufficient information provided by the fiche. Thus, not only did the bank's computer system exert tremendous influence on the manner in which Betty's performance was evaluated, it was also critical in regulating the pace of her work. More calls could be processed when Betty was obliged to respond, "Our activity files are unavailable now. Can you call back in an hour?" This was a usual request made of a customer if the computer was down.

Betty's work was tightly regulated by the technology of her job. Her breaks were taken at 4-hour intervals, and she was given a 45-minute break for lunch. Although their telephone activity was constantly monitored, Betty and her co-workers were allowed some measure of control over the pace of work. Customer representatives could simply unplug their telephones to avoid incoming customer queries. They could "cover" their "unplugged time" by taking more time than might be necessary in filing reports, stuffing envelopes, and handling other paper work. Betty, however, was never observed to pull the plug on incoming calls.

After 2 months on the job, Betty was not only bored with her work, but she was also extremely upset about what she regarded as the bank's rigid enforcement of rules regarding absences and lateness. After 90 days, Betty had called in ill once and had been 3 minutes late to work on 2 different occasions, which placed her on a list to be "counseled" by her supervisors. For Betty, being an employee of the bank was like being back in school. Although she expected the bank to be conservative, she did not expect her supervisors to be strict and distrustful. The following reflects her observations:

> Employees are assigned to seats at work like in school.
> Employees are not permitted to receive personal telephone calls . . . and [telephone] lines are . . . monitored.

Not only were calls regulated, but behavior in the office could also be scrutinized by supervisors who had placed specially ordered glass panels on their office door to allow them a clear view of office floor activity. Betty quit her job at Midland after 9 months as a customer representative.

Miriam: Bookkeeping Clerk, River City Bank

Miriam would have preferred secretarial work to the position she was given part-time in the bookkeeping department at River City Bank. During the 7 months she was employed by the bank, her tasks remained essentially the same, processing and filing one of the following sets of documents: overdraft notices, checks and statements, deposit and withdrawal slips, and statements for personal accounts and occasionally for business accounts. Miriam's department in the bank was responsible not only for processing monthly statements but also for handling customer queries. Miriam worked in the same department as River City Bank's customer representatives, but on the periphery at a work table

facing away from the computer stations where the representatives worked. Unlike Betty, Miriam re-ceived no initial training designed to acquaint her with the bank's structures and policies. Instead, training for her tasks occurred on an ad hoc basis as the nature of the particular bookkeeping chore changed. The pace of work in her case was highly dependent upon the monthly cycle followed by the bank in issuing statements to its customers.

By not having received either an orientation to the bank or written materials explaining bank policies, after a full 2 weeks on the job, Miriam was still unaware of such procedures as whom to notify in case of lateness or sickness or even of the whereabouts of the employee lavatory. She remained equally mystified about such issues as evaluation and the extent to which it was permissible for employees to use conversation to regulate the pace of work. She suspected after 2 weeks of work that conversation was not regarded positively: "They don't like you to talk here. Whenever Sharon . . . [a co-worker] comes back to work at the files, we talk a little and Margo . . . [the supervisor] comes over and gives us more work."

Although the atmosphere in Miriam's department seemed gradually to lighten and spontaneous conversations to increase among the workers, these conversations rarely involved Miriam primarily because of her location at the periphery of the work area. Also, as a part-time worker, Miriam was expected to put in 5 hours of work between 10:30 and 3:30 without a break. Interactions most frequently involved customer representatives who sat side by side at their respective telephones with the computer screens in front of them, much as at the Midland Bank where Betty worked.

Miriam's isolation was an important aspect of her strategy for regulating the pace of work in the bookkeeping department. She used mental games such as timing her successive performances of a particular task to regulate the pace of work in much the same way that Roy had done in the early stages of his work as a die cutter. Another aspect of her job that contributed to this method was the decreasing amount of time spent in conference with her immediate supervisor. By the second month on the job, training that had taken up 12-15 hours of her 35-hour work week had dropped to 5 hours per week. By the third month, direct instruction on the job had completely fallen off. Without regular training sessions built into her day and with no official breaks scheduled to

punctuate the flow of work, Miriam became increasingly isolated from the flow of activity around her.

During her third month at the bank, a new clerk with similar job responsibilities was hired. Miriam and Donna became friends, riding to work together on the bus and "sneaking" occasional conversations together over a filing cabinet at work. It was at this time that Miriam began to consider seriously another job. When a representative of her employees' group, The American Banking Institute (ABI), discussed the set of course offerings sponsored by the ABI for office workers, Miriam expressed interest and took a brochure. The brochure presented information on two types of courses, all of them offered as seminars after business hours from 6:30 to 9:30 in the evening. Under the category Functional Courses were listed courses in consumer bankruptcy, branch management operations, loan interviewing, selling bank services and new deposit instruments. Under the heading Banking Support Courses were courses focused upon fund bank data processing, preparing for supervision, and microcomputers in banking. After looking over the materials, Miriam remarked: "I don't see anything here about typing," and put the brochure aside. Of course, she was correct; all the courses assumed only an interest in pursuing a managerial position within the banking industry. Miriam, although frequently asked, typically declined to take extra hours when additional clerical help was needed to get business statements out at the first of the month. Miriam was put out by the bank's policy regarding overtime. "They expect you to stay overtime, don't pay you any extra, and don't even give you a break." Instead, Miriam went home every day to practice her typing. "I've got to keep my skills up."

The poor rapport between Miriam and her supervisor was obvious from the first observation made at the bank. During a 15-minute training session, her supervisor did not once establish eye contact and never referred to Miriam by name, something that Miriam herself commented upon during the course of an observation some time later.

Relationships with her various supervisors did not improve during the course of Miriam's employment. Each side viewed the other with suspicion. Miriam's reluctance to work overtime was taken as evidence of her lack of interest in her job. Since she occasionally gave babysitting responsibilities

as an excuse, it was even assumed that she had an out-of-wedlock child at home. Miriam had no idea of what the bank expected of its employees. "It seems they want you to smile and talk to them a lot. What would I have to talk about with them? I come here to do my job." Establishing supportive relationships with her supervisors was impossible for Miriam, given her lack of of experience and the chilly atmosphere of her department.

Miriam quit her job at the bank to take a job on the assembly line at the major toy manufacturing plant where her mother worked. She reported that she was much happier in this job primarily because "they let you talk to the person you're working with."

Don: Repairman, A-1 Appliance Service Company

According to Bill, one of A-1's two owners, the summer of 1983 was the hottest since 1954. The shop's work load during the summer months was staggering. The back room was continually crammed with as many as 50 air conditioners stacked 8 high around the room. The shop's work area was a 10 X 10 space in which the men worked on the machines. There was a stationary work bench along the wall and table in the middle. Each man had a work cart, the hulk of an ancient dishwasher on which the disabled unit was placed and wheeled around to the work bench, table, acid bath, and the tank of freon near the table. A man might work on a single unit for a full morning or might complete repairs in a few minutes. During October, the amount of work awaiting the attention of the men was considerably reduced. During the last weeks of October, the men began to bring up stoves, refrigerators, and washing machines from the basement storage area. These appliances were overhauled and moved to the salesroom at the front of the store where they were available to customers who walked in off the street. Repairing these machines constituted the shop's bread and butter during the fall, winter, and spring when few air conditioners were brought into the shop for repairs.

Although the volume of work in the shop during the peak days of July and August was considerably greater than in October, the pace of work established by the employees remained fairly constant. What changed over time was the content of the banter that punctuated the pace of work, although the pace of work itself remained the same. During the summer, tempers often appeared to be bare-ly under control. In the fall, after two of the men had been replaced,

the tone was far more relaxed. It is difficult to say with absolute certainty that it was primarily the shift in personnel and not the reduced work load that influenced the social interaction. However, the equilibrium in the pace of work observed in the summer appeared to extend into the fall. Unlike the men in Roy's die manufacturing shop, the men in the appliance shop did not have a ritualized "banana time," although "Coke time," "coffee time" and "cigarette time" regulated the flow of production. The conversation that punctuated the work flow had a thematic content (i.e., the same conversations recurred and appeared to both reinforce individual worker identities and maintain the hierarchical order of the shop). Pete, the new employee, although a participant in the interaction, infrequently initiated conversation. Nonetheless, his opinions and reactions were often explicitly sought. Recurrent conversational topics include relationships with women, preferences in music, and chatter about sports.

Pete's initiation into the work culture of the appliance shop was eased by his relationship with the parts manager, Roy, his brother who was influential in getting him the job. In contrast to Don who was also hired during the summer but who was subsequently fired, Pete's interactions with his co-workers appeared to develop smoothly and rapidly. He was quickly absorbed in the pace of work and actively contributed to its maintenence after less than a month on the job.

To provide a picture of the pace of work in the shop and the different relationships of the new employees, Pete and Don, to their co-workers, the following excerpts from field notes taken during two different observations has been provided. In each case, the period of time is approximately 20 minutes during the day's work. Each observational period followed a major break in the pace of work. In the first episode, Pete had just finished lunch, which on that day was a sandwich hurriedly eaten in the shop.

> Pete puts on his apron and leaves the shop briefly before coming back and approaching Tom, the supervisor's brother. Tom's brother has left the room to assist Don, the other new worker who is repairing air conditioners in the showroom since the shop is too crowded to accommodate a fourth conditioner and cart. Pete asks Tom a question, and although he is on the telephone near the stationary work bench, he responds saying, "Heat it up--in--the tubes. See if it flows better." Pete, at the work table says "You get better at it." Tom concludes his conversation on the phone and walks over to Pete saying, "Let me show you." At this

point, Bob, one of the store owners, walks into the room and says, "Tom . . . whenever you're ready to pick up the fan motors." Tom replies, "I just talked to them about it." As Don and Tom's brother, Frank, the shop supervisor, walk in with a large air conditioner, the lights begin to flicker indicating that a fuse is faltering. Don is told to set the circuit. As he leaves, Tom asks, "Do you know where they are? Don replies, "Yeh," and leaves. Meantime, Pete is working on the coils of his air conditioner with an arc torch. Don returns and says, "This hasn't been a good day at all." Tom says, "I didn't say a word." He moves to Pete, looks at the air conditioner he is repairing, and says, "Beautiful." Frank moves to assist first Don and then Tom and asks Tom if he has heard about the fan motors. Tom replies, "They don't know if they have them. The computer says they have two." Frank returns to assist Don while Pete adjusts two gauges on the wall. Pete pauses, then turns to Don and asks, "Do you turn these counterclockwise?" Don hesitates for a moment and then answers, "Yes." Tom moves closer to Pete at the moment and Pete repeats his question: "Do you turn these counterclockwise?" Tom says, "Yes," and Pete continues to adjust the dials.

The lights dim and Tom says, "I think the air conditioner blew the fuses." Frank, working with Don, says to him, "It kicked in right away, didn't it?" Don replies, "In a few seconds." Pete lights a cigarette, continues to work on his air conditioner, and asks Frank about regulating the freon he is injecting in the unit. "That thing's got to be running when I pump that in?" Frank says, "Yeh. About 20 ounces." Frank looks over Pete's shoulder as he continues to adjust the dials. Tom also watches and begins to tinker with the dials. Pete explains to Tom what he is doing while Tom watches and holds his hand in front of the unit as if to test the flow and temperature of the air. As Tom leaves, Pete says, "I think I found a leak." Both Don and Tom approach to look. Tom disagrees and Pete explains. Tom looks relieved and says, "I thought you said 'it wasn't really a leak.'" At that moment a spray of freon explodes from the machine, Don shouts at Pete, "I never saw you move so fast!" Pete says, "It didn't scare me as much as it did the other day." Bob, the owner, enters and asks, "Anybody not doing anything? There are bulbs out downstairs." No one responds. Just then a man moves a washer into the shop through the side door.

At first glance, the pace of work seems unremitting and the division of labor among the men fairly equitable. After all, Pete, Don, Frank, and Tom were all engaged in repairing air conditioning units during this 20-minute period. However, upon close examination of the events observed during this episode several things became clear. First, directives from Bob, one of the shop owners, were not acted upon. Recall that Bob first told Tom that he could

pick up the fan motors whenever he was ready. Tom chose to put off the errand and, in fact, did not attend to the task for several hours. Bob later mentioned to no one in particular that light bulbs in the basement needed replacing. This statement did not even draw a response.

The men were in charge of the pace of work in that they regulated the flow of their efforts. Although each man was a participant in this effort, a pecking order among the four workers was clear. Frank and Tom supervised and monitored the work for the two new employees. However, Don and Pete were accorded differential praise for their work. Pete's work was acknowledged when Tom approvingly said "beautiful" as he passed Pete's cart. Pete's efforts were encouraged. Tom said, "You get better at it," and provided unrequested assistance. In contrast, Don was given the job of resetting the fuses that were faltering because Pete's machine was pulling considerable amperage. The authority of Don's response to Pete was questioned when Pete, apparently discounting the veracity of Don's observation, immediately turned to Tom and raised the same question about the dials. Pete took a cigarette break; Don who also smokes, did not. And finally, when Pete let loose a jet of freon into the shop, an amateurish mistake that we did not see any other worker make, Don commented on the error, but was the only person who did so. Thus, although the pace of work was managed by all the men, it appeared to be managed to benefit Frank, Tom, and Pete at Don's expense.

In October, 2 months after Don was fired, the shop atmosphere was far less tense, though the pace of work remained the same. The following 20-minute portion of field notes taken during an October work day begins as Pete returns from running an errand for Virgil, Bob's partner and co-owner of the shop. He had gone by foot down the street to have Xerox copies made of three invoices since the shop did not have its own duplicating machine.

> Pete returned to the kerosene bath in which he has been working all morning. Kerosene has been poured into a refrigerator crisping tray. Pete has been cleaning the plates and parts of a washing machine transmission and continues this job that consists of bathing the parts, placing them in a vise to file them after wiping off excess kerosene, using an air hose that emits a highly compressed stream of air to remove particles, bathing the plates in oil after placing several other pieces back on the plates and putting the two plates back together with the transmission's contents encased inside.

Pete looks up from the vise where he has placed the transmission plates and says, "I need some ool (i.e., oil). He looks around and asks, "Where's that tool at, Frank?" Frank asks, "what did you do with the pump, Gary?" Gary points and as he gestures, says, "Right here." Meanwhile Frank is assisting a new worker, Sam, in taking apart a large Tappan range. Gary asks, "What did you do with my nice clean, clean . . . what do you call it? . . . throw rug?" Fred points in the direction of the far end of the back room. Gary gets the rug, places it in from of the washing machine he is repairing, and sits down crosslegged to face the machine. Virgil comes back and looks at the stove that Sam and Frank are repairing, doesn't say anything, and leaves. Pete is filing the transmission plate while Gary is pounding the bottom of the washer. Frank leaves while the new worker remains at the stove, removing burners from the top of the Tappan. Pete shuts off the machine and adjusts the transmission plate in the vise. Pete asks Gary a question and Gary assists saying, "You put the shaft here . . . two pumps, two circuits . . . Gary assists Pete in rigging up the oil cylinders, which begin to ooze an oil substance on the top of the plate.

Fred returns from the lavatory and walks to the Tappan. Frank turns to Gary and says, "Go upstairs and bring [ ]. Gary says, "Needa ball and t-bearing." Frank, now inspecting Pete's work, says, "They don't leak that way," and removes one of the plates. Gary asks, "We got any balls in stock?" Frank says, "Sure." Gary asks, "T-bearings?" Frank says, "Yeah, upstairs." Gary responds, "You hope," as he goes into the loft to fetch the parts. Frank has now turned his attention from the stove to the transmission Pete is repairing. Frank says, "Put this here. I'll back off [ ]." Pete continues the work on his own while Frank returns to the Tappan briefly before leaving the room. As Gary decends from the loft, he remarks, "Oh, Pete, Sherrie liked that joke." Pete replies "Brenda didn't, huh?" Gary says, "I'm glad she was sick cos she woulda chewed me up." Gary adds, "Her sister's different." Pete says, "Like me, huh?" Gary says, "Not everyone's a druggie," and chuckles as he turns to the new employee and says, "You can turn this on." Gary backs off from the Tappan saying, "Boy . . . lots of grease . . . wash it with kerosene, wash it in water--about 170--hot, soapy water." Sam responds, but his remark is unintelligible. Gary says, "They said it checked out okay." Sam says, "They replaced the valve." Gary says, "See if they want you to clean 'em up.'" starts mimicking a radio jingle, "Only 15 minutes from downtown." Gary returns to his washing machine as Frank returns to assist Pete. When the job is finished, Frank leaves the room. Bob and Virgil enter the shop. Sam, the new employee, looks up from the Tappan and says, "Bob." Bob replies, "Yes, sir." The new employee says something unintelligible about the range. Bob responds, "We had this out; it didn't work. I told Frank to check the thermostat, check the gas valve." Sam, says "It opens up [ ]." Bob replies, "Let him play with it. If we get too many people involved, no one will know what we're talking about."

Bob and Virgil leave and the new employee fiddles with the Tappan's timer, which begins to buzz. Frank returns and he and Sam continue to work on the Tappan.

During this 20-minute interval, Gary and Frank's roles as mediators of management norms seem particularly clear. Their roles were really complementary. Gary was the boisterous, fun-loving cutup who later that morning described "a nice little scuffle" he had seen at a bar that previous evening, concluding his narrative by saying, "The bouncers drug the guy out by his throat . . . be a really nice bar if they got Frank Sinatra off the juke box." However, Gary was also a respected mechanic who provided assistance to both Sam the new hire and Pete who was still learning the intricacies of repair work on a variety of machines.

Frank who was married, coached soccer, and also held a job as a city firefighter was the shop authority. Although the new employee requested Bob's advice on repairing the Tappan when Bob and Virgil chanced to come near his work station, Bob deferred to Frank who was temporarily out of the shop.

In the appliance shop, workers appeared to have developed a relatively stable work culture that emphasized norms of cooperation and reciprocity among members of the shop's corps of repairmen. Gary later complained that the shop "is for the birds . . .I don't get to sit down or drive." As a road man, Gary had considerable autonomy and could enjoy the pleasures of driving around the city free from close supervision from co-workers and the two shop owners. Nonetheless, while in the shop, Gary smoothly particpated in and maintained the pace of work.

Jerry: Materials Handler, Slade, Inc.

Slade, the factory where Jerry was employed, closely approximated Roy's and Burawoy's machine shop setting. The work was divided among specific groups of manual laborers, some (i.e., the mechanics) recognized as more skilled and experienced than others (i.e., the materials handlers), and work was carried out with the assistance of tools and machines. The rates at which the machines ran and the type of staple produced by a specific machine regu-lated the flow of staples from the machine to the work surface where packers sorted clumps of staples and stuffed them into cartons. Despite the time tests of the plant engineers at Slade, packers, mechanics, and material handlers, in-cluding,

Jerry swore that the machines ran at variable speeds, depending on such factors as the heat and humidity. Each night several machines would break down or an operator might be at home sick, resulting in a production slowdown on the floor. Thus, learning the job at Slade involved becoming sensitive to a wide range of factors and even included developing a good weather eye.

Jerry worked his 32 machines at a pace designed "to keep the machines clear." This meant both picking up the cartons of packed staples that machine operators stacked to the side of the work surface and replenishing dwindling supplies of empty packing cartons for the operator's use. Jerry moved his dolly up and down three aisles on the factory floor, picking up cartons from alongside the machines lining the aisles. The cartons, weighing from 10-50 pounds, were placed on the dolly and removed to a work station where they were sorted onto pallets, individually stapled shut, and later taken by forklift to a central loading area. Jerry made separate runs for each of the operations, which were usually completed within less than the hour's time between breaks. Breaks were scheduled at hourly intervals on the half hour for the six material handlers on the floor. The expectation was that each man would have completed a set of runs so that each machine for which he was responsible was cleared during the course of a given hour. The agreed-upon procedure was two runs before the first break (at 4:30 p.m.), two runs before lunch (at 7:00 p.m.), two runs before the second break (9:30 p.m.), and two runs before quitting time (11:30 p.m.).

Despite the continuous, deafening roar of the pounding machines, interaction in the shop was almost constant. Themes of playfulness and cooperation predominated in shop floor interactions among materials handlers, operators, and mechanics; the roving crew of skilled and experienced workers who repaired malfunctioning staple machines, as well as among the crew of materials handlers who frequently orchestrated their work at the end of each run to enable the crew to break at the scheduled intervals. Most of the operators were women and two or three of them were extremely playful. As Jerry pulled his dolly within range of their machines, one of them would leave her machine, stand defiantly in front of Jerry, tweak his nose, pull the bill of his cap down over his eyes, or else remove it from his head and place it on her own head or begin to tickle him. Because the machines were so loud, nonverbal interactions were most effective in gaining and holding attention on the factory floor.

The most spirited horseplay developed between Jerry and two operators who worked adjacent sets of machines near the end of one of the aisles. One of the packers, Veronica, was about 25 years old, whereas the other, Eloise, was in her 50s. Both were tiny women, standing no taller than 5 feet and weighing no more than 90 pounds. From other operators, Jerry typically acquired information about how the machines were working that evening, information that assisted him in timing both his box-fetching and box-loading runs; however, he got nothing but grief from Veronica and Eloise.

One evening early in his first run one evening, Jerry's cap was snatched from his head by Veronica who grimaced, sneered, and taunted him while wearing the cap on her head, bill backwards, for the first half of the shift. As Jerry approached Veronica's machine on a subsequent run, he muttered to me, "This is about the worst part of this job, I think." Jerry then warily grabbed his cap off Veronica's head. An excerpt from the field notes describes what happened:

> Veronica in turn plucks the cap from his head and pulls it back over her ears, saying, "You better ask for a pretty new cap for Christmas." I ask, "Why don't you get one for him?" Veronica replies, "Oh no--he's getting a lollipop. Right, baby?" Jerry grimaces while Veronica reminds him, "You should remember to respect your elders."

Veronica's co-worker, Eloise, though perhaps less overtly sexual than Veronica, was no less physical. Instead of grabbing Jerry's hat or jumping on his back as Veronica was observed to do, Eloise customarily would pinch Jerry's nose or ears or spank him, reminding him to be a good boy and threatening to tell his mother. This was no idle threat. Although she worked in another division of the plant, Jerry's mother had been employed at Slade for 13 years and occasionally "visited" Jerry during his shift, asking him to babysit for his sister's 2 children the next morning or requesting some other favor.

Jerry's primary work relationship, however, was with the five other materials handlers. Even in this context, Jerry was plagued by his status as the youngest worker on the plant floor during the swing shift. However, he suffered far less abuse from his co-workers then he did from the merciless Veronica and Eloise. In large part, the ethic of cooperation that developed among the materials crew was forged by the patterned, regular nature of the established work schedule. It was reinforced by the foreman, Tom, who by his

own estimation spent 95 percent of his time on the floor. His constant presence sometimes dampened workers' spirits, but Jerry and his co-workers were observed to ride dollies "side saddle," toss cardboard packing strips "frisbee" fashion, and even leave the floor heading off toward the factory lavatory half an hour early to shower and change for a date. Tom emphasized both cooperation and a spirit of equalitarianism and interdependence among his work crews. He identified himself closely with his subordinates and saw all of the shift workers as those who "knew the business" as opposed to the plant engineers who, although their status as experts allowed them to maintain that an adjustment to a machine looked good on paper, their ignorance of how things really worked on the floor sometimes led to disastrous results, as is noted in this excerpt from the field notes:

> Once I told one of those guys that this certain part he wanted to try would jam the machine. He wouldn't listen, installed it, and sure enough, it jammed the machine.

Tom did very little to interfere with the materials handlers, and, although he might be "on the floor" most of the time, he actually spent very little time directly supervising Jerry and his co-workers. Instead, Tom insisted that the best strategy from his perspective was to allow the young workers a free rein in developing their own strategies for doing the job. Although Jerry soon learned a system for pacing his pickups and deliveries, he continually modified his method for stapling and stacking the filled cartons at the end of his pick-up run. At times, he completed this operation on his own, but most often he was observed to accomplish this phase of the task cooperatively with his five co-workers. The following episode, from the field study notes, describes how this phase of the procedure occurred. In this instance, Val, who at 27 was the oldest and most experienced member of the crew, approaches Jerry after Jerry had some difficulty stapling shut one load of cartons. Jerry is approaching his second loaded dolly, holding his air-driven staple gun as Val comes over:

> Talk between Val and Jerry centers on the air hose in Jerry's staple gun that has come loose. It appears that Val is passing on "hose lore" to Jerry. Val staples Jerry's boxes shut while Jerry hoists them onto the pallets. Val explains the air hose story to me. It seems that a guy from another department had come to fix the hose but mistakenly thought that Val's staple

gun was broken and left before having a chance to fix Jerry's equipment.

The interaction between Val and Jerry continues with Val stapling and Jerry loading. Val runs into some problems with the staple gun and pauses every so often to adjust it so that the staples will flow smoothly. "Hillbilly Don" begins to assist Jerry in unloading the dolly. The three workers interact. Jerry gives Val a string of staples that have erupted from the gun and Val continues to seal the cartons.

Al a fourth materials handler, comes over and begins to pick up two boxes of staples from Jerry's pallets. Jerry dives on the cartons to prevent Al from taking them. Al reminds Jerry that the latter had taken two cartons from him the week before to even out a load. Jerry conceded that this is true and allows Al to take the cartons.

At the time of this event, Jerry had been at work in the factory for approximately 3 months, only a month or 2 less than the others. The cooperative efforts described in this example were accomplished with very little verbal negotiating and resulted in a mutually desired objective--completing a run before the scheduled break at 9:30 a.m.

Fitting into his job at Slade was made relatively easy for Jerry by several factors. First, he had the personal skills, specifically a capacity to accomplish physically demanding work with relative ease. The field notes indicate that one of the machine operators characterized the work of the materials handlers this way: "They bust ass on that job. It's the hardest work with the least amount of pay here." As a former baseball player for his high school team, Jerry had the physical power to hoist 50 pound boxes as if they were children's blocks. In addition, he had a particularly charming blend of naivete and flirtatiousness that enable him to run the gauntlet of factory floor interactions with machine operators. Second, Jerry's family connections provided him entry to his job, and his community affiliations allowed him to be easily integrated into the factory culture. Several of the operators and mechanics on his shift lived in his small semirural town. Jerry carpooled with them and often on Friday nights went out for pizza and beer. He had very little to do with his co-workers, the other materials handlers, after-hours although he attended the wedding of one of them and at least once double-dated with "Hillbilly Don" who was seeing the lunch room cashier. Employers at Slade stressed the family feeling of this nonunion factory. Jerry's history

was well known to supervisors and managers remotely connected to his division simply because they, too, lived in his small town. Finally, the stress on cooperation in a work context that allowed for great flexibility and autonomy in designing and carrying out his tasks contributed to his easy accommodation to the work culture at Slade.

Conclusion

Cultural transmission in the work setting is an active, negotiated process that seems to be most smoothly accomplished when the novice is easily assimilated into a work crew whose interactions are governed by a code of cooperation and flexibility in accomplishing the task at hand. In other words, the labor process and the pace of work that governs it substantially shape the new worker's accommodation to the work setting.

Management culture is important in this process but only because the way that it is characterized by the new worker appears to play an important role in the "success" or "failure" of the new worker in accommodating to the job. At best, management culture through the role taken by the new worker's supervisors is perceived to be actively supportive. At worst, it may be seen as very hostile, inflexible, rejecting, and enigmatic.

Certain organizational settings appear to be less likely to provide benign work climates than others. The findings of the Adolescent Worker Study suggest that these are likely to be banks and other large institutions where routing mental labor is carried out by young, entry-level workers, usually females, in accomplishing such tasks as filing, checking monthly statements, and the like. There appears to be a high level of mistrust in these settings. In the cases of both Betty and Miriam, relationships became so badly eroded by mistrust that both quit their job. The regulation and control of work tasks by computerized systems in such settings limit and control worker independence and autonomy rather than expanding the job by increasing task variety and enhancing decision-making opportunities. According to management experts, organizations such as banks and insurance firms are "trying to join the new electronic technologies with the old style of rigidly hierarchical management and tightly circumscribed jobs. As computers are introduced, remaining jobs tend to be redefined to require less training or skill" (New York Times 1984).

In contrast, the appliance repair shop and the fastener factory, like the die cutting shop in the earlier studies of Roy (1959-1960) and Burawoy (1979), promote relatively easy integration of most new workers, usually males, into the job. To be sure, Don is not successful in his accommodation to the repair shop in large part because his personal values and background experience undermined relationships with his co-workers and supervisors from the very beginning of his employment. Unlike Pete, the other new worker, and Jerry, the factory employee, he is not buffered by having well-established relatives working in the organization. Although Jerry sustains a fair amount of harassment from female packers on the line, he is able to develop strategies for protecting himself against their assaults. Jerry eventually changed shifts and on "graveyard" encountered none of the annoying banter that he had endured working the earlier shift. On the whole, the repair shop and the fastener factory both provide far more autonomy in carrying out job-related tasks. The tasks themselves were manual and less alienating than the mental work done by Miriam and Betty in the bank. Workers in the shop and factory settings were well aware of their locations in the flow of production. In the bank, neither Miriam nor Betty had much control over their jobs. They were subject to the monthly cycle of business and personal account activity. In addition, Betty was burdened by the unpredictable and intrusive nature of the computers that functioned to both regulate and control her work.

In both the shop and factory settings, workers were explicitly told to organize their tasks in a manner harmonious with the individual worker's skills and predilections. Interaction between workers and supervisors occurred on a daily basis and co-worker interaction was virtually continous despite the deafening noise from machines in the factory. By contrast, the bank's organizational arrangements created a gap between supervisor and workers and the jobs themselves were inflexibly dependent upon schedules and designs completely out of the worker's control.

So long as employers in their capacity as supervisors remain aloof from new young workers, and especially when their distance is stretched further by technologically innovative systems, young workers will feel threatened and alienated. There seems to be the sentiment abroad among supervisors that young part-time workers are highly expendable. Few employers will actually express these sentiments directly. However, policies governing hourly wages, break

times, and informal conversation on the job, as well as expectations for near-perfect performance, seem most heavily calculated to promote the failure of young, female office workers in particular.

REFERENCES

Apple, M. W. "The Other Side of the Hidden Curriculum: Correpondence Theories and the Labor Process." The Journal of Education, forthcoming.

Baules, S., and Gintis, H. School in Capitalist America. New York: Basic Books, 1977.

Benson S. P. "The Clerking Sisterhood: Rationalization and the Work Culture of Saleswomen in American Department Stores, 1890-1960." Radical America 12 (1978): 41-55.

Borman, K., and Reisman, J. eds. Becoming A Worker, Cincinnati: Ablex, forthcoming.

Braverman, H. Labor and Monopoly Capital. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974

Burawoy, M. Manufacturing Consent. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1979.

Buros, M. E.; Kim, C.; Santos, R.; and Shapiro, S. "Youth Looking for Work." In Tomorrow's Workers, edited by M. E. Buros, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1983.

Dobbert, M. L. Ethnographic Research. New York: Praeger, 1982.

Goetz, J. and LeCompte, M. Ethnographic and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. London: Academic, 1984

Heath, S. B. "Questioning at Home and in School." In Doing the Ethnography of Schooling, edited by G. Spindler. New York: Holt, 1982

Moore, D. T. Knowledge at Work: An Approach to Learning by Interns. Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1983.

Roy, D. F. "Banana Time: Job Satisfaction and Information Action." In Human Organization, 18 (1959-1960): 158-168.

Rumberger, R. "Recent High School and College Experiences of Youths." In Youth and Society 13 (1983): 449-470.

Valli, L. "Becoming Clerical Workers: The Relation between Office Education and the Culture of Femininity." In Ideology and Education, edited by M. W. Apple and Lois Weis. Philadelphia: Temple University, 1982.

Van Maanen, J. "Breaking in: Socialization to Work." In Handbook of Work Organization and Society, edited by R. Dubin, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1976.

Willis, P. Learning to Labor. Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977.

Wolcott, H.F. (1982) "The Anthropology of Learning." Anthropology and Education Quarterly 13 (1982): 83-108.

CHAPTER 6

TRAINING IN ADOLESCENT WORKSITES

by

Margaretha Vreeburg Izzo

Experiential learning has long been a cornerstone of vocational education. The assumption behind the experiential model is that young trainees, under the careful supervision of a mentor-journeyman, learn workplace skills by interacting with the environment and by observing and modeling the work-related activities of their peers. Moore (1983) recognizes the importance of experiential learning as evidenced by his claim that "a great deal of learning goes on in the workplace . . . experience is the best teacher".

Moore addresses several essential characteristics of learning in job settings and pays particular attention to the social context of that job setting as it relates to learning. Moore (1981) identifies these three components as characteristic of work-related learning: (1) a problem or a task along with information about its nature, necessary knowledge sources to complete the task, and relevant criteria to evaluate task performance; (2) some activity by the worker that uses the information and human resources available in the environment; and (3) alternative strategies and solutions to the problem arising from problem-solving activity by the worker.

Several other factors relating to the personality traits of the learner and the trainer contribute to the successful or unsuccessful performance of a task and subsequent learning in a particular work environment. For example, the amounts of initiative and assertiveness the learner displays and the compatibility of the learner and trainer are critical factors affecting the learning that takes place in the work environment (Moore 1981).

Acknowledgements: I would like to acknowledge the help of Jane Reisman and Kathryn M. Borman who provided assistance in organizing and editing this chapter.

Bishop (1982) has found that among occupations there are substantial differences in the number of hours new hires spend in training. During the first 3 months of work, professional, technical, and managerial employers on the average spend approximately--

- 14 hours in formal training,
- 98 hours in informal training, and
- 70 hours watching others do their job.

Service workers, on the other hand, spend considerably less time in training. Service workers on the average spend approximately--

- 5.6 hours in formal training,
- 50 hours in informal training, and
- 29 hours watching others do their job.

When comparing the differences in productivity among these workers, Bishop (1982) concluded that lower investments in training seem to be associated with smaller rises in productivity. The positive association between training time and productivity, then, seem to indicate a payoff for an increased investment in training time. He also found that formal on-the-job training and informal training by co-workers seemed to increase as establishment size increased. However, smaller establishments used informal training by management most frequently.

In the Adolescent Worker Study, much attention was paid to how youth are trained at work. After an intensive investigation of approximately 170 work observations in over 46 different work sites, we were able to identify and analyze 119 training incidents. In addition, we analyzed interviews conducted with 25 youth in the project, their managers and supervisors. After an extensive analysis of these data, it is evident that training episodes are diverse and varied.

Some training incidents observed in the Adolescent Worker Study compared closely with traditional structured classroom instruction. For example, an extensive training program in a financial institution for a new employee hired as a customer inquiry representative was elaborately structured. It provided highly detailed knowledge about the workplace, using audiovisual aids, direct instruction, and other hallmarks of the traditional classroom curriculum. Betty's training program included a complex curriculum that was implemented

throughout a 21-day training period. Betty described her work tasks in this manner:

> We were on the phones for 8 hours a day. Calls were routed through an automatic call waiting so the calls just rolled in. You deal with the customers directly; you answer whatever questions they have . . . you would write out forms . . . there were a lot of forms to fill out (6/21/84).

When Betty, the 19-year-old new hire, was asked to describe her training program, she responded:

> We . . . [the new hires] were in a separate room by ourselves with a teacher. She handed us manuals the first day - these huge big black manuals and a couple of other little books. What we did was slowly go through the entire book and learn everything. We took a test every day. We had a test when we came in in the morning and then reviewed the material for the next test . . . It was just like school, really (6/21/84).

Betty herself saw a direct similarity between the worksite's training program and her school experiences. Her training program used manuals or instructional materials, slide shows, computers, demonstrations, observations at the job site, and classroom lectures. Employees were also given homework and expected to pass daily quizzes and two comprehensive exams. When Betty was asked how she liked the training, she responded:

> I love studying. I like to learn so it was pretty neat for me . . . the training was basically school. I thought $3.86 per hour to learn was good (6/21/84).

Betty also indicated that if she were in charge, she would structure the training in the same way with only minor changes. She felt that this training program was well organized and very effective.

Her training clearly provided an excellent learning environment, according to Moore's essential characteristics. The classroom environment provided Betty with the information about the task and the necessary knowledge sources to complete the task, namely, the training specialist and the "big, black manual." Betty's performance was regularly evaluated through daily quizzes and verbal feedback after she had taken calls under close supervision. She remained eager to learn and showed initiative throughout the training period. Not only did Betty judge the training as worthwhile, but her performance was

also positively evaluated when she received good ratings on her 30- and 90- day evaluations.

New hires at different job sites had other training experiences. Jerry, for example, was hired at a large manufacturing firm as a materials handler or production technician. Jerry described his job:

> You have to go through these machines and pick up these boxes, put them on your cart, take them over to the sealing area, and tape them up, pack them on the sealer, put them wherever they go, depending on the box, and stack them the way they're sup-posed to be stacked (8/2/84).

Jerry's job was structured by a routine series of steps that he repeated over and over again. He indicated that he averaged about 550 boxes a night, the expected norm or standard for his job. His training was extremely uncomplicated:

> Well, they took me down the aisle I was going to work. I watched Terry (a co-worker) twice and then I started doing it. He (Terry) just watched (8/2/84).

When the interviewer probed further into the training process, she discovered that Jerry's training also required that he review a manual of company rules and attend a 4-hour class. The class included a film on safety techniques for driving a forklift. These activities were interspersed while Jerry was "doing his job."

Jerry was asked if he thought his trainers were effective and responded:

> I guess they were effective. I learned everything that night . . . if they spent more time it would be wasted cause you just need that one night, . . . and he told me everything that I had to do; he didn't tell me nothin' extra (8/2/84).

The interviewer also asked Jerry if he thought the location where Jerry had received his training was beneficial. Jerry responded by saying,

> I'm glad I received it where I was at. I like to see what my instructor was talking about (8/2/84).

Training within the social context of the job setting was judged effective by the new hire. Jerry liked learning in the work environment because the necessary knowledge sources to complete the task were present.

As these two training experiences demonstrate, the cognitive demands of a particular job clearly dictate how intense and extensive an establishment or department training program should be. Betty's job as a customer representative required that she gain broad knowledge of banking procedures and policies. To learn her job thoroughly, she needed extensive training, whereas Jerry could learn his job by observing a co-worker for a few minutes.

In another financial institution in a different city, Miriam, an adolescent worker in a job setting similar to Betty's, did not receive an extensive overview of the bank's policies and procedures. This young worker received poor evaluations and eventually left the worksite. Should we assume that she failed at the bank or that the bank had failed to train her?

In an analysis of this specific case reported later in this study (see Borman, "Fitting into a Job: The Pace of Work"), Borman observes that Miriam, the new hire, and her supervisor failed to establish a trusting relationship during Miriam's employment. Miriam received no initial orientation nor additional instruction in connection with a training program. She was isolated from co-workers and reported that a supervisor immediately gave workers more to do if they talked with one another. Borman concluded that adolescent workers quit jobs in environments that severely constrict worker autonomy and independence and thus undermine relationships between workers and supervisors. Miriam quit her job at the bank, acknowledging that the lack of independence, trust, and support in her work environment were the primary factors in her decision.

This chapter illustrates the effect on new hires of work environments that provide Moore's essential characteristics for learning in the social context of the work setting and that also provide a structure supporting a rationale for the organization's policies and procedures. These new workers tend to stay employed longer, thus increasing their productivity and worth to the organization. Young employees in establishments offering more comprehensive training programs and supportive work environments, tend to like their jobs more than their peers who do not work in such environments. This chapter also analyzes the extent to which training provides the young worker with enough information to do the job adequately and to understand the organization's management structure.

In the first section of this chapter, such broad questions as who does the training and how long does it last will be addressed. This will provide insights into how training actually occurred in all 46 worksites where youth in the study were employed. Data for this section were collected from 170 work observations. Researchers then discriminated training episodes from other work and nonwork activities. From these observations, 119 training incidents were identified. Each training incident was analyzed to determine who the trainer was, how long the training lasted, and what type of instruction was used. These data were then quantified, and the results are presented in the following sections of this chapter. These quantified findings will then be applied in further analyses to distinguish those environments that provide Moore's essential characteristics for learning and that also provide a supportive environment conducive to growth within the organization.

Who Does The Training?

Co-workers

Co-workers are responsible for 44 percent of the 119 identified training incidents in the adolescent worksite. As shown in table 7, this percentage represents the largest number of those individuals involved in training at the worksite.

TABLE 7

TRAINERS IN THE ADOLESCENT WORK SITE

Trainer	Percent Distribution
Co-worker	44
Client	1
Supervisor	31
Manager	21
Training Specialist	3
Total	100 (N=119)

Training incidents involving a co-worker and the new hire were observed in all of the worksites. In some instances, these training episodes were directed by a manager or supervisor who would tell the co-worker to show the new hire a specific task. For example, in the passage below, the department

manager has just given the new hire, Val, an orientation to the department. Then, Mr. Winn, the manager, tells Val that a co-worker will show her how to process terminations.

> There are certain things we have to do with those contracts. There is a rush to get someone loaded in the system, otherwise they don't get paid. It's not the case with termination. There's a stack out there. We have to get those caught up. You are going to be doing that all the time. It's just something that needs your immediate help. You are going to be working hand in hand with Sally (co-worker). It's fairly important that you and she have a good set of cards between you (6/13/83).

During this orientation, Mr. Winn orchestrates the training provided by the coworker. The manager also explains that the rationale for carrying out the tasks that Val is being asked to complete.

At the same worksite, a second co-worker shows Val another task without the direction from the manager.

> Linda (co-worker) tells Val that she is going to learn a new project. She tells Val to come by her desk. Val pulls up a chair. Linda tells her that the printouts usually have carbons so she won't want to wear white on production days.
>
> Linda tells Val how to view the printout and rip it into sections. She demonstrates ripping it into sections using a letter opener. Then Linda moves over and switches chairs with Val so she can try it (7/7/83).

The coworker, Linda, assumes responsibility for teaching Val how to view the printouts and rip them into sections. The co-workers demonstrates the task and then observes during Val's first few trial attempts.

Other co-worker training incidents were initiated by the new hire. In the training incident below, the new hire, Betty, has a question about the phone call she is handling. The customer has asked for information that Betty does not have so she asks a co-worker.

> Betty takes another call. It's a complicated call about a veteran's check. Betty gets up and asks lady (a co-worker) next door . . . . Betty, "I don't know what to do about it?" Other lady says, "Tell him to call the Veterans Administration." Betty tells the man and gives him a number; man says, "Okay" (11/7/83).

Training by a co-worker was often initiated by the new hire at the worksite. When new hires have questions, they often ask a co-worker the correct procedures.

In six standardized interviews, we asked the new hire to rate the importance of the co-workers' contribution to their training on a scale of one to five, one being of high importance, five of low importance. Fifty percent of the new hires rated the co-workers' contributions to their training as a one.

Whether co-workers are directed to train a new hire or whether co-workers spontaneously respond to questions from the new hire, almost 50 percent of the training that occurs within worksites clearly is provided by the coworker. Co-workers also have an important role in acclimating a new hire to a worksite and assigning them tasks. Yet, how does training provided by the co-worker compare to Moore's theory of learning in a work environment? In many training episodes, the co-worker is the necessary knowledge source to assist the new employee in completing a task. Sometimes the co-worker also evaluates the task. For example, Linda, Val's co-worker, evaluated Val's performance by observing Val's first few attempts at ripping sheets from printout materials. However, when a new hire initiates a training episode by asking a question, the episode is not always evaluated. Unless performance criteria are determined initially by a supervisor or manager, many training incidents conducted by a co-worker in response to a new hire's question are not evaluated and therefore, do not meet Moore's criteria for a successful learning episode.

Given this high degree of involvement by the co-worker, I will compare peer relationships in schools with those at the job site. In many classrooms, students compete against each other for grades, recognition, and honors. In test situations, students are penalized for cheating. Although many students learn such appropriate social behaviors from each other as the "right" clothes to wear and what haircuts are "in" that year, youth probably do not clearly comprehend the advantages of learning classroom material together because they are afraid of being accused of cheating or copying. Do educators teach youth to be team players when learning classroom material? The emphasis traditionally has focused on measuring individual student performance on tests and assignments that are completed independently. Schools need to address these issues by structuring some learning activities through team projects. Once youth

enter the work force, they need to become team players quickly or they may not learn how to do their jobs.

Supervisor

Supervisors are responsible for the second largest percentage of training at the adolescent worksite; they trained new hires in 31 percent of the total training incidents. Larry, a supervisor at a sheet metal shop, trained Al, the new hire, on his first day on the job.

> Larry and Al walk over to the shears. Larry demonstrates and leaves. Al begins work. Larry returns and watches silently. He stays a few minutes and returns to work (6/6/83).

Here the supervisor demonstrated and then evaluated the task.

In six standardized interviews that were conducted with both new hires and their immediate supervisors, all participants were asked to rate the importance of the supervisor in training. The new hire's average rating was three on a scale of one to five, with one being of high importance. Supervisors, on the other hand, rated themselves as having high importance in training new employees.

New hires were also asked to rate their co-workers' importance to training on the same scale. New hires reported that co-workers have more importance to their training than do supervisors.

Managers

Managers are involved in training during 21 percent of all training incidents. Managers are more closely involved in training when a new hire first starts on the job, as demonstrated by an excerpt from Al's first day at the sheet metal shop.

> Al arrives early for the shift. Sits in luncheon room with Larry, supervisor and is given policy manual to read by Tim, the manager (6/6/83).

In this particular worksite, project staff have never observed the manager working with Al after his first day on the job. This worksite was organized so that the manager communicated with Larry, the supervisor, and was only involved with a new hire when a major problem occurred.

Managers may direct training from a distance, as in the case of Val (see co-worker training discussion), but they do not get as involved in the details of training as co-workers and supervisors.

Training Specialists

Training specialists conduct training in more formal and complex settings,such as financial institutions. Specialists were involved in training incidents only three percent of the time. Project staff observed that when a training specialist is involved, a more thorough orientation is provided to new hires. Topics covered in one observation of a comprehensive orientation session conducted by training specialists included employee benefits, eval-uation criteria, and a detailed overview of the pay structure, describing how raises are earned. These topics are reviewed by a training specialist in the orientation session for a mail room employee and a customer inquiry representative at the same bank in the excerpt below.

> The position description tells you what you need to do and will also indicate how you will be evaluated. When they compare jobs, they compare responsibility, not just job titles.' Grade level and hourly rates explained. Shows transparency, Pam asks them to check to make sure that their hourly wage falls within the range indicated on the transparency. Minimum and maximum salaries explained. Explains pay structure, 'you can't pay the tellers as much as you would managers because they have a college education and manage 25 - 50 employees . . . more responsibility.' Explains the evaluation process . . . 'that's how you rise up the payroll scale.' The "critical factors" are job knowledge (how well do you know and understand your job), quality of work, quantity of work, dependability, resourcefulness, attitude and cooperation, and customer relations. How do you get along with customers? How do you dress?
>
> You are rated one to five in each category and then you are given an overall rating:
>
> 1 - on probation, for 30 - 90 days, not eligible for salary increase; you may be subject to termination.

2 - almost reach the bank's expectations, first review after 90 days. Your supervisor will work with you, counsel you, go to benefits for additional training.

3 - consistently attain expectations; you know your job very well.

4 - consistently exceed expectations; you outperform others consistently.

5 - greatly exceeds expectations.

Pam explains how your ratings affect your pay raises. A rating of:

1 gives you 0% of a pay increase,
2 gives you a 1-4% chance of a pay increase,
3 gives you a 5-7% chance of a pay increase,
4 gives you a 6-8% chance of a pay increase,
5 gives you a 10% chance of a pay increase.

The higher your performance is the more money you'll make. The key to salary increases is performance (9/13/83).

The evaluation criteria used at this organization are thoroughly explained to every new hire. Employees in this organization know how they will be evaluated and how raises will be distributed based on these evaluations.

In addition to providing a clear orientation to a worksite, a training specialist also increases the amount of training completed by a group or a class of new employees and increases the amount of formal training for some new hires. These variables, however, are associated with the position and the department. For example, a mail room employee at a financial institution was provided with less than 4 hours of instructional time with the training specialist. Most of the mail room employee's training was completed by co-workers in the mail room. However, Betty, the new hire working as a customer inquiry representative at the same financial institution, received an intensive 21-day training class run by a full-time training specialist assigned to that department. The following passage was taken from Betty's training program:

9:15 Susan comes in to give some basic overviews of the banking system. Betty takes a folded piece of paper out of her purse. Susan explains how money passes from the customers to the branches. This department is called operations.

9:27 Slide show--the slide show reviews branches and all the other buildings associated with First Bank in the area. The

> building that we are in, drive-through bank, bank on Morse, bank on Route 161 . . . . Key people: Tod Simpson, Vice President, Tony Pumar, Assistant Vice President, Becky Singer, all trainees will report to her.
>
> Sandy Breve does interviewing for this area. Vera heads the customer inquiry area. Susan says "listen to Vera, smart lady, you'll learn a lot from her."
>
> 9:45 Slide show continues to cover key people in the other departments (9/14/83).

This training episode features a multimedia presentation and a thorough orientation of key actors in this work setting. All new customer representatives are grouped into a class for this training episode. A training specialist is more likely to provide an overview of the organization, providing new employees with a greater understanding of organizational policies and procedures. When a training specialist was involved at a worksite, and new hires at the worksite were asked how effective they felt their training was, the new hires reported that they felt their training was very effective.

Client

Training was also conducted by a client (1 percent) in a health spa situation. Clients tend to get involved in training when they witness a new hire in distress, or in other words, making errors. Laurie, at work on her first day at the spa, is assisted by a new member:

> One member, Ralph, called Laurie to the side and offered help: 'Let me help you out a little bit.' Later, he came over again to give input. After that she began to ask him questions on her own 8/11/84).

Laurie did not learn how to use each machine accurately during her "official training" which was a walk through the machines by co-workers. When she had difficulty instructing a client on the proper use of a particular machine, another client intervened and offered help. Laurie and client interacted repeatedly over the next hour of work. Clients do actually contribute to a new hire's training as evidenced by the above example.

How Does Training Occur?

Verbal Incidents

Verbal training incidents are the most common mode of training. Simple commands from either a co-worker or authority figure make up 71 percent or 84 of the 119 training incidents observed in all of the work sites (see table 6).

Verbal training episodes are generally short. A question is asked, and an instruction is provided. These incidents of training are usually sequenced concurrently with task demands so the employee can continue working on a task assignment. Other types of training and their corresponding percentage distributions are provided in table 8. Besides witnessing verbal instruction, researchers observed training episodes that were provided through printed materials, demonstrations, and classes.

TABLE 8

TYPES OF TRAINING

Mode	Percent Distribution	
Print Material	2	
Verbal Instruction	71	
Demonstration	24	
Class	3	
Total	100	(N=119)

Class

The most formal type of training observed were "class" episodes. Three percent of the training episodes coded were categorized as a "class." Three percent of the training coded on table 7--Trainers in the Adolescent Worksite --was conducted by the training specialist. Training specialists apparently use the "class" mode for training. An observation of a training specialist conducting an orientation in a class setting was presented in the training specialist section of this chapter. Information presented through the class mode is typically factual.

Print

Only 2 percent of the training incidents coded used the print mode. The print mode involves activities such as reading policy manuals or procedural guidelines. An example of a print training incident is cited below. The incident occurred on Al's first day when Tim, the manager at the sheet metal shop, handed Al a copy of the policy manual to read.

> Al arrives early for the shift. Sits in lunchroom with Larry, supervisor, and is given policy manual to read by Tim, manager. Tim just provided Al with his orientation to the company (6/06/83).

Note how the evaluation criteria are not specified. Al never read this manual.

Demonstration

As indicated in table 8, 24 percent of the total training incidents observed were demonstrations. Co-worker, supervisors, and managers were all seen demonstrating tasks to a new hire. The example below takes place in the mail-room of large financial institution on the new hire's first day on the job. The new employee's co-worker, Bill, is showing Ray how to run a mail meter machine.

> Bill is a co-worker. He is in his 20s and white. He explains that he began training Ray about 30 minutes ago. Ray is standing in front of the mail meter machine right now. This machine weighs packages and prints stamps. Bill explains and demonstrates. The machine has a keyboard and printer. Place package on scales attached to keyboard. Push first class. Weight is printed on video display and stamp cost. Push print button--printer prints white stamp with red ink stating value. Tear off stamp and stick on package. To the right are two mail bags. The mail clerk must decide if the package is thinner or thicker than 3/4-inch to place it in appropriate bag (9/13/83).

Training by demonstration was used frequently in the fast food worksites and the health spa facilities. On many occasions, demonstrations were used when the training involved the use of machines or a series of tasks that could more easily be demonstrated than described.

Duration of Training

Seventy-six percent of all training incidents observed were 5 minutes or less in length. Another 16 percent of training incidents were between 6 and 30 minutes in length. Therefore, 92 percent of the training involving new hires occured in 30 minutes or less. Table 8 presents by percentages, how the duration of training incidents is distributed.

TABLE 9

DURATION OF TRAINING INCIDENTS

Duration	Percent Distribution	
5 minutes or less	76	
6 to 30 minutes	16	
31 to 60 minutes	2	
1 to 2 hours	1	
More than 2 hours	3	
Not Ascertainable	2	
TOTAL	100%	N=119

From this table, one can conclude that most training occurs in short episodes, suggesting that the major part of the training adolescent workers receive is informal and nonsystematic. Many of these training incidents were initiated by the new hires through a question. Once the new hires had received an answer, they could proceed with the task at hand.

Only 4 percent of all training incidents lasted more than an hour. Adolescent workers do not receive extensive training of more than an hour in length on a regular basis. Given that only 3 percent of all training in-cidents observed were conducted by a training specialist in a class environ-ment, and only 4 percent of all training incidents lasted more than one hour, one can conclude that the adolescent worker receives very little systematic, formal training opportunities within most adolescent worksites.

Training in Nonsupportive Environments

In the preceding sections of this chapter, evidence has been presented suggesting that training in adolescent worksites frequently occurs in a nonsupportive environment. Of the 119 training incidents observed, 44 percent were conducted by co-workers, 76 percent lasted less than 5 minutes, and 71 percent

were presented as verbal instructions. Clearly many youth receive training in a spontaneous and nonsystematic manner. In this portion of the chapter, the several case studies and industries to be discussed reveal that much of the training in worksites is not only spontaneous and fairly random, but it also takes place in a nonsupportive environment.

The case study of John, a new employee at a roller-skating rink, provides some particularly clear examples of a nonsystematic and nonsupportive training environment. John worked at a small establishment employing five employees. The manager, Diane, generally provided informal directions to her staff.

As the observer entered the work site one evening, John was vacuuming the rink. John commented that he had been there for an hour because the manager decided the place needed cleaning. During the evening, the manager gave directions in a brief, cursory manner as illustrated by the following episode:

> The manager emerges. This is Diane. She says, 'Guess who's cleaning the toilets and guess who's sweeping the rug?' as she holds up rolls of toilet paper and a bowl brush so that the answer is quite obvious. John (looking a bit sheepish) says, 'Yes, but I'm new at this job.' Diane remarks, 'Yes, John, but a toilet is a toilet.'
>
> John continues to sweep the carpet . . . . John asks Diane, 'What about the sides?' Diane, 'I want it all done!' John continues sweeping. John asks where some keys are stored. Diane responds, sounding very tired, 'Don't you know where they go?' John continues sweeping (1/16/84).

A few minutes later, after a co-worker arrives on the scene, John asks the co-worker where the keys go. The co-workers tells John where the keys are stored.

In the previous incident, the manager answered John's immediate problems with a quick, offhand remark about John's particular task. When John asked for further directions or asked a question, the manager responded either curtly or with a sarcastic question that did not provide the requested information. Her remarks appeared to discourage John from seeking additional information from her. Instead, John waited to seek help from a co-worker. The environment, in this case, did not provide the necessary sources of knowledge for a productive training experience.

In the same observation, during a break, John entered a conversation taking place between the manager and a co-worker. The co-worker asked which schools were scheduled to come to the skating rink.

> Man asks, 'Which ones?' Diane, 'St. Ignatious on Palmer Road.' John, 'St. Obnoxious.' Diane, 'I don't want you to say that tonight, just in case you're thinking about it.' (1/16/84)

When John attempted to be funny in this episode, he was reprimanded by Diane. his manager. John's flippant sense of humor apparently had little appeal to his manager. Moore points out that compatibility between the learner and trainer is essential to a productive work environment where learning can occur. Diane and John obviously did not have this relationship.

Several other episodes present clear evidence that Diane and John's working relationship was not very good. John frequently expressed the concern that he was not sure how "busy" he should appear to be while on duty in the cloakroom where he checked wraps and distributed skates:

> John comments that he wouldn't be surprised if Diane came up to tell him not to talk to the observer. He says, 'But I don't know what I'm supposed to do back here.' John says, 'I wonder if I should be doing something instead of standing here!' He adjusts racks of skates (1/16/84).

Rather than asking the manager what he should be doing during idle moments, he avoids the manager whenever possible:

> John ducks back into the clothes rack as Diane passes in order to avoid talking to her (1/16/84).

In this worksite, training often involved the exchange of sarcastic remarks between John and Diane. In summary, the worksite did not provide the qualities Moore associates with positive experiential learning outcomes.

A Comparison of Two Adolescent Work Sites

Nonsystematic training in an unsupportive environment occurred most often in the two industries employing primarily youth, namely, health spa centers and fast food establishments. Both sets of worksites have several similar features. Both are characterized by a hierarchial structure with few managers controlling many employees. Employees may have different roles within the establishment but have little or no authority over any other worker. Both

industries employ relatively few workers in particular work sites, typically hiring between 5 and 15 employees to work during the same shift. Also, both are service industries that have expanded dramatically over the past decade.

How does training occur within these two service industries? Based on Bishop's (1982) predictions, one would expect to observe approximately 5.6 hours of formal training, 50 hours of informal training, and 29 hours of informal observation of others doing their jobs. In most work sites that we observed, new hires received systematic training only on their first day on the job. Little formal training occurred after that time. The discussion of the fast food work site that follows provides examples of the training that occurred on a new hire's first day on the job in these settings.

Fast Food Work Site. Cindy obtained a job at a fast food restaurant in a busy section of the city. She was trained by the floor manager on her first day at work:

> She stayed in the back for 7 minutes before returning with Tim, the floor manager. He took her to the salad bar and began to explain the names and arrangements for the various salad bar components. She was very attentive as he advised her to be clean and quick; the salad bar was to be replenished at all times. She watched him fill trays and wipe the counter. Then they went into the back and returned with tomatoes, lettuce, and bacon bits. He kept talking to her about how to do various duties concerning the salad bar. She was told to watch the bar carefully, to stay out of the way of customers, to keep the place clean, and to stay busy. For the next several trips she followed him to the back and returned with supplies. After the fifth trip he returned to serving customers and she manned the bar alone. She seemed nervous, almost mechanical at first. There were a lot of customers at the bar and she seemed unsure how to proceed (5/29/83).

Cindy's formal training lasted about 30 minutes. She was trained by a manager who worked with her until he felt comfortable that she could perform the task according to his standards. Cindy watched the manager, and then imitated the manager's actions.

How do these training episodes compare to Moore's list of essential characteristics necessary for a positive learning experience? The manager demonstrated the task, explaining each step to the new hire as he performed it. He then explained the performance criteria: "watch the bar carefully, stay out of the way of customers, keep the place clean, and stay busy." Cindy followed

directions to the manager's satisfaction and did learn to complete her job successfully since the manager did not give her any additional directions or criticisms. Thirty days later, Cindy received a good performance evaluation.

Although Moore's critical elements of training were present in this short episode, the element of support was clearly lacking. The observer reported that Cindy seemed "nervous, almost mechanical." In fact, she was treated in a very detached manner and experienced only routine interactions with her supervisors. Managers in this fast-food establishment rarely took an interest in their employees.

Health Spa Centers. In a sample of 25 youth, 6 of the participants were employed at a health spa at some point during the 12-month period. Training at the health spa was primarily informal and depended on the needs of the new hire and the amount of time available by either a co-worker or a manager.

Terry was hired as an instructor at the spa. He worked on the equipment floor and instructed clients on the proper use of exercise machines. When Terry was asked how much training he received, he responded, "For most of us there was no training." Terry also did not know his salary or whether he would be paid overtime for the many hours he works over 40 hours.

Laurie also was hired as an instructor at the spa. The following description shows the type of training she received:

> Her training as an instructor was a walk-through by Tim and Hally (co-workers). She previously had worked at another spa and received training there. They hold weekly meetings and go over different routines. Hally, program director at the spa, used to be one of her managers at another spa (8/11/83).

Laurie's training was informally directed by a co-worker and no performance criteria were established. During this same observation, a client became involved in training Laurie:

> Laurie has been given some advice by members with regard to her instructions on the exercise machines. One member, Ralph, called her to the side and offered help: 'Let me help you out a little bit.' Later, he came over again to give input. After that, she began to ask him questions on her own (8/11/84).

Laurie most likely would not have required the assistance of a client if she had been provided an adequate training experience by the spa personnel.

When Laurie was on break, the observer asked her what type of training she received. She told the interviewer that "she came in for a few hours on Sunday for training to do this (cardiovascular) testing." (8/11/83) She did not receive any training for the proper use of the exercise equipment except for the brief episode previously presented.

Another worker employed at the same spa as a receptionist checked ID's, gave out locker keys, answered the phone, explained various spa policies to guests on their first visit, and assigned program directors or instructors to the guests. The worker, Karen, described her orientation to the work site:

> Interviewer - Did they explain to you what their policies were as far as attendance or tardiness is concerned?
>
> Karen - 'They didn't tell me nothing.'
>
> Interviewer - 'They didn't tell you anything? Did they give you anything?'
>
> Karen - 'Like I told you before, I went in there on Monday morning and ah, you know I dressed like, you know, like they were going to hire me cause Donna said they were hiring. They told me to go ahead and start to work. They never told me about my job duties or anything. They just said - 'now come with me, here's your time card' and they filled it out and they stuck me at the receptionist's desk and told me what to do. They never gave me a set schedule or anything.' (8/13/83)

New employees not only received inadequate training, but were not oriented to the job site as far as wages, work schedules, attendance policies, and other standard operating procedures. During Karen's first week, she worked with a more experienced co-worker to learn the procedures of a receptionist. At one point, the floor manager, Candy, came up to the desk and said the following to Karen:

> 'You have to give the new customers a program directory when they first come in. I've got to yell at you when you do something wrong you, dip shit.' Karen responds, 'OK, OK, I didn't know, you poodle head.' She brushes the top of Candy's head. Both girls and Candy laugh (8/15/84).

When Karen's performance did not meet a manager's standards, Karen's actions were corrected in a flippant manner by the manager.

Some informal training by management, did occur occasionally at the health spa. At the end of one work day, Josh, the manager, showed Karen how to close out the guest registry. This interaction followed:

> Josh picks up the guest registrants. 'I'm going to show you how to close out this.'
>
> Karen looks bewildered, but smiles. Josh starts to write down numbers. Karen watches, but then has to serve a customer. Josh continues to figure the numbers and then three more customers come. Josh finishes and Karen looks over an says 'great teaching.'
>
> Josh explains how to quality each guest. Counts the total number of guests, and explains each column. Josh asks, 'Do you understand?' Karen nods yes. Josh changes the numbers and says, 'How does that change your totals?' Karen looks at numbers, points, and says, 'That would be 16.' Karen was right. Josh says, 'Good!'. Then Josh gets a phone call. Leaves the receptionist area (8/15/84).

Training incidents occured irregularly in this health spa environment. The employees' flippan attitudes and interruptions by customers indicate that training new employees is not a high priority. This work site did not provide the qualities identified by Moore associated with positive experiential learning outcomes.

Overall, neither Karen or Laurie had a successful learning experience at their respective work sites. Karen was fired after 4 weeks and Laurie quit after 8 weeks. Because a supportive work environment was not provided for each of these new hires, these adolescent workers did not survive their jobs.

The Importance of Supportive Work Environments

The less formal the training program, the more job "success" depends on getting along with co-workers and authority figures. In the case study of John, who was employed at the roller-skating rink, the training he received did not provide him with the necessary information about his duties. In addition, resources were not present to help him define his job or show him how to perform it. In addition, John did not get along with his manager.

Cindy, the salad bar tender in the fast food restaurant, involuntarily left her job in 6 months due to scheduling conflicts with a second part-time job (see Reisman and Borman, "Quits and Firings Among Adolescent Workers" in this volume). Although Cindy was willing to continue working both jobs, the

scheduling could not be worked out to satisfy the fast food manager's needs, so Cindy was terminated.

In the health spa worksite, when Karen did not give a new customer a program director, Candy, the floor manager, corrected Karen's behavior by joking about it. Karen retorted in a playful manner by patting the manager's hair. Karen managed to get along on the job until a transfer of managers occurred. Karen did not get along with the new manager, Mark:

> Karen - He said he needed someone that was dependable. (pause) He was weird. I didn't like him.
>
> Interviewer - He was different from Josh, wasn't he?
>
> Karen - Me and Josh got along good. I liked him. But Mark was different. I didn't like him (9/27/83).

Within several weeks of Mark's transfer to the spa, Karen was fired and Laurie left voluntarily, both, at least partially, due to a poor working relationship with the new manager. Because rules and policies were never spelled out clearly for the new hires, both workers broke the policies or made errors in judgment that contributed to their terminations. Karen describes how and why she was terminated:

> Interviewer - 'So . . . what happened your last day at the spa?'
>
> Karen - 'Well, I didn't have a ride and I asked Debbie to work for me and Debbie said sure she wanted to work that day anyway.'
>
> Interviewer - 'So really you got your own replacement? What did Mark say?'
>
> Karen - 'He said he needed someone that was dependable.' Karen felt she was being dependable by arranging for her own replacement (9/27/83).

Mark, the manager, describes how and why Karen was terminated.

> Mark - Karen's verbal warning was not for the same reason that she was terminated. Karen's verbal warning was for her mouth and talking back, not so much to me, but I had numerous complaints from members. In most cases, I take those with a grain of salt because they're dealing with 400 or 500 people a day. I tried to talk to Karen about the fact that she is a lippy individual, which is fine; you need somebody a little strong out there at the desk sometimes, who won't take a lot of the things they're not supposed to take at the desk. But some of the undocumented things . . . . [bothered me] - and I'm easy on these kinds of

things. For example, we're supposed to be ready to work at 9 o'clock and Karen would walk in at 9:05 or 9:10, but so would everybody else, so I'm not a real stickler on that, but they start taking advantage of it. I thought Karen was taking advantage of it. And when Karen did not come to work that day because she had a court date, there was no previous warning to us that she had a court date. I wanted a note stating she was in court, and then that would have been fine; it would have been an excused absence, but she didn't have one and she just admitted that she didn't go to court. Lying is something that doesn't settle real good with me. I can tolerate a lot of other things, but that's one particular thing that doesn't rest real easy with me. As well as not being happy with a few things that she was doing at the desk, this was one of the things that was like the straw that broke the camel's back' (9/26/83).

Karen clearly did not understand the policies and rules of this worksite. Perhaps if she would have had an opportunity to explain her schedule conflicts and transportation problems, a reasonable solution could have been negotiated. However, Karen's work relationship was so poor with the manager, that she did not attempt to work out her problems.

Clearly, in all of the worksites new hires had the shortest periods of employment in jobs that devoted little to no time to orientation, lacked a clear job description, and lacked an adequate training program with qualities identified by Moore. In our sample of 25 youth, 8 workers were employed in either fast food or health occupations; this represents almost one-third of the entire group. Not one of these new hires remained employed in these jobs for more than 4 months.

Youth move in and out of these unsupportive job sites more frequently than from those settings that offer a more supportive and systematic training program. Apparently youth sometimes conclude that when a company invests little time and resources in their training, they are not obliged to invest loyalty and responsibility.

Training in a Supportive Worksite

According to the study, job sites that carved out formal training often had specially trained and identifiable personnel available to new hires. Among the 46 worksites in this study, the following 3 trained youth with the assistance of a training specialist: a financial institution, a grocery store

chain, and a retail establishment. Job sites that provided training specialists for new employees are characterized by the following:

- Closely monitored training programs
- Clear job descriptions
- Higher starting wages
- Supportive work environments
- More formal evaluation processes with raises and promotions closely correlated to performance.

As might be expected, those establishments that offered more formal training programs were larger companies. These companies generally employed youth longer, thus offsetting the cost of additional training with increased productivity on the job. Bishop (1982) found that as on-the-job training increases, productivity increases as the employee's tenure increases.

The following example describes how a large corporation orients a new hire to one department. The department director describes his plans for training Val, the new hire on her first day in his department:

> Mr. Winn wants her to understand complete tasks--not just subsections. Along with a co-worker, Val will be responsible for processing agents. Although Val will be able to function autonomously right from the start, it will be about 6 to 8 months before Mr. Winn expects her to grasp the scope of her job. He further hopes that Val may develop an interest in upward mobility. At present, he has an opening available as his assistant and no one on his current staff shows that they are interested in becoming a manager (6/13/83).

The director planned in advance how he would give the new hire an overview of his entire department and meets with Val immediately after she arrives at the office:

> 8:00 a.m. Val begins the day with a meeting with Mr. Winn, Director of Agency Administration. They meet in his office. He sits behind his large uncluttered wooden desk. She sits across from him (as I did). Mr. Winn wants to explain IC's distribution system and how we sell insurance. He informs her that insurance agents are contractual agents--not employees--important distinction--keep that in the back of your mind. Mr. Winn continues on to explain the licensing process. (He is using sophisticated language in this discussion but occasionally uses football analogies such as 'the whole nine yards.'
>
> 'At this point, I don't want to fill your head with a lot of details that don't mean a whole lot to you . . . I want to give you work stuff. Hopefully, it will make more sense to you later.'

> Still, he continues to explain. There are distinctions between agents, brokers, and part-time agents. We handle all administration. We are like the personnel department, computer department, finance . . . as it relates to the field. We are here as a service organization to the field. That's our primary function.
>
> You are going to be working hand in hand with Sal. It's fairly important that you and she have a good set of cards between you. Mr. Winn calls co-worker, Sal, on phone. Asks her to come to the office. Meanwhile, he asks Val, 'What do people call you?' Val, 'Val.' 'Everyone calls me Mr. Winn' (6/13/83).

Mr. Winn goes on to explain to Sal and Val what the specific assignment is. Even though Val will be trained by a co-worker, this training activity is being orchestrated by the department manager.

In contrast to the training experiences of such workers as John, Karen, and Laurie who received primarily informal training, Val is getting more formal training. Clearly the corporation is investing time and money into making her a productive worker: the manager takes time to provide an overview of the company for Val, introduces her to co-workers, and monitors her training activities.

The Bonding Process

This process of providing support for a new hire was nonexistent in the fast food and health spa industries discussed earlier in this chapter. The establishment Val works for makes an obvious attempt to make her feel comfortable and loyal to the corporation. This process will be described as the "bonding process." Bonding is highly correlated to the time and money invested in training a new hire.

In the case of John, the roller-skating rink worker little, if any, bonding occurred between the manager and the co-worker. John can be easily replaced by another youth at little cost to the organization. Notice in the episode below how John lost his job:

> Observer: Describe to me exactly what happened with Diane.
> John: I don't know, I just couldn't breathe on Monday morning with my asthma so I called her and told her I couldn't come in because I wasn't breathing. I'm the only one there cleaning, sweeping up all this dust and breathing it in. She didn't believe me. She said it's raining and you don't want to take the bus in the rain. I said if you don't believe me, I'm not going

to argue with you about it. I don't need to work for somebody that don't believe me, so I told her to tell me I don't have a job if she don't believe me. She never told me, I haven't been told yet by her.

Well, John went in on his next scheduled shift and was talking to a co-worker about the previous incident. John tells the observer what happened.

John: I was telling Chad about it, what I was going to do, and he said 'you don't have to do it because she . . . (Diane) already replaced you' (4/10/84).

In 2 days, John was replaced for calling in sick. He was never told by the manager that he would be fired and was informed by a co-worker he had been replaced.

Analyzing Val's work situation, one will find many incidents of bonding between the manager and Val and Val and her co-workers. Although the following examples focus on this issue of smoking, this issue is not the central focus. What's important is that the manager and the co-workers made Val feel comfortable in the work site. The following episode occurred on Val's first day after Mr. Winn provided an orientation to the department.

Mr. Winn: 'Then this afternoon we'll work on termination procedures.' Asks Sal about it. 'Why don't you get started? Sal will be the one to answer any questions you may have.' 'Could you maybe take Val around the floor and introduce her to everyone? OK?' (Altogether, 45 minutes have been spent on this training session.) Val returns from the introductory tour and goes to her desk. Begins reading letter and commences to revise it. Lights a cigarette. Inserts letter into typewriter and types it. Another woman enters room (Judy). Judy 'Val, hi, I am Judy.' Val, 'Hi.' Val shows letter to woman behind her (Bess) and asks help in identifying a written word. Bess, 'He (Mr. Winn) has a reputation for being a lousy writer.' Val, 'Just like Carl (former boss).' A new woman enters office. Bess, 'Val, this is Mia. You may have seen her down on five (fifth floor). She came to visit me.' Two of the office workers are chatting with Mia. Mr. Winn enters room. Sees Val smoking. 'I finally hired someone who smokes. Someone else to bum ciga-rettes from.' He exits. Lauri, 'He will too, he's a bummer.' Mr. Winn comments on Val's personal habits. Sal enters. Mr. Winn says, 'Look at this Sal. I hired someone who smokes menthol cigarettes.' They all light up. He resumes explaining the importance of termination (6/13/83).

Val was introduced to her co-workers, and Mr. Winn announced to the co-workers that he is glad that he hired someone who smokes. Once Val has been

openly accepted by the manager, the co-workers accept Val into their office chatter and break activities:

> 2:25 Lots of chatter, joking about the work, like making fun of the name, as Linda and Val sort and tear printout. Judy is working on the microfiche but also converses with them. Bess offers to go to the cafeteria. Takes orders. Val wants only pretzels. Bess tells her she should get something to drink with it because her mouth will be dry (6/13/85).

The bonding process already has developed on Val's first day on the job. Appraently worksites that invest more time and money in hiring and training a new employee also make a personal commitment to help that new hire adjust to the jobsite. The manager, Mr. Winn, accepted Val into the office publicly on two separate occasions, and co-workers, following the manager's lead, offer to fetch snacks and drinks for her.

Betty, another worker at a financial institution and involved in a 21-day training program, summed up her experience:

> The training was really weird because they were so nice. It was completely different (from school). They made you have this sunshiney outlook towards the bank. They treated you with a lot of respect, gave you a lot of bathroom breaks, and all this stuff--had donuts for you and things like that (6/24/84).

In summary, larger establishments often invest time and money into a new employee's training experience and also provide a supportive environment that gives new hires a sense of belonging. New hires in these environments usually stay on the job longer than those who work at establishments that do not provide an adequate orientation, a comprehensive training program, or a supportive work environment.

Conclusions

Training in the adolescent worksite can range from systematic task episodes using all of Moore's essential characteristics of learning in nonclassroom settings, to informal experiences that hardly resemble training. Training also can be performed by a co-worker, manager, or training professional. Large companies provided the most comprehensive and formal training programs for youth entering positions in the company that require an extensive knowledge of a cognitive area. For example, Betty, a new hire at a financial institution,

and Val, a new hire at a corporation's headquarters, received the most extensive training. However, large corporations do not provide systematic training programs for youth entering such nonskilled jobs as mail room deliverer. Such employees, however, are frequently provided a systematic orientation to the corporation. In orientation, evaluation, pay raise, and promotional structures are explained, but job-related information is not provided.

However, not all large corporations provide systematic and supportive training programs. One new hire employed at a large financial institution did not receive an orientation to the organization nor a systematic training program. This new hire also did not experience a supportive work environment and due to a combination of the above reasons, left the work site after 7 months.

For the most part, corporations invest more time and money into training new hires. After this initial investment, the management staff can promote an environment more conducive to retaining their workers over longer periods of time. In addition, observers at worksites that provided more systematic training opportunities for new hires, witnessed more bonding occurring among managers, workers, and co-workers. New hires, they found, are more likely to stay on the job longer than new hires who work in job settings without a systematic training program and supportive work environment.

Although corporations provided opportunities for youth, most youth in the study worked in small businesses or in establishments that employed less than 20 workers per worksite during any given shift. Training in these settings was more informal and varied and often done by the manager. Smaller establishments usually paid lower wages as well. Job hopping--or frequently moving from one job to another, also occurred more often in smaller establishments. This may be because smaller businesses screen their new hires less rigorously than larger corporations. The major contributing factor to the high turnover rate among adolescent workers appears to be the lack of a systematic and supportive training environment within the worksite.

As students, youth in the study dealt with a systematic grading system that generally resulted in a report card every 6 to 9 weeks. Doyle (1983) reported that an elaborate system of points earn a student credit towards a

final grade. For example, an English teacher may give a certain percentage of points to class attendance, test scores, writing assignments, and class participation. These points are averaged to produce a final grade. King (1980), in his work on student thought processes and the expectancy effect, reported that the evaluative climate in the classroom connects academic tasks to a reward structure, namely, report cards. He found that report cards motivated students to learn and that they seemed to be the ultimate goal of many students. In general, youth moved from a school environment that shaped them to respond to formal authority figures through such frequent feedback and evaluations as comments and grades (Sieber 1979), to a work environment in which only 11 percent of training incidents were evaluated.

The evaluation process in the adolescent worksite was sporadic at best when compared to youths' evaluation process at school. Since only 11 percent of training incidents were evaluated, clearly, many youth entering the labor market do not receive sufficient performance evaluations. What does constitute a satisfactory employee performance evaluation system? Landy, Barnes, and Murphy (1978) found that the evaluation process is central to many personnel decisions, and the likelihood of goal acceptance depends partly on the individual's current perception of the fairness of the system. Mount (1983) and Landy, Barnes, and Murphy (1978) agree that performance evaluations are considered fair and accurate if the guidelines below are followed:

- Evaluations are frequent.
- The evaluator is familiar with the performance level of the person being evaluated.
- Both the evaluator and employee agree on the specific job duties.
- The evaluator helps the subordinate form a plan to eliminate weaknesses.

Dipboye and Pontbriand (1981) also concluded that discussing objectives and plans related positively to perceived favorability of the appraisal system. Burke, Weitzel, and Weir (1978) concluded that the higher the level of subordinates' participation, the more likely the employee would accept the evaluations. Burke, Weitzel, and Wein also found that the less the subordinates participated in the evaluations, the less they felt motivated to improve their performance.

As youth move from schools to work, they need to become more assertive in asking the key questions such as "What is expected of me?" and "How am I measuring up?" For an average of 10-12 years, students had course re-quirements and grading procedures clearly spelled out. Now, as workers, they do not know how they are being evaluated or how they are performing. This is one critical area that our study has documented.

Success on the job, especially in smaller establishments, also is dependent on a combination of personality and skills, rather than on such formal standards as attendance, punctuality, knowledge of work tasks, quantity of work, and so on. Managers often are free to hire and fire youth based on their needs and personal preferences. For example, John, an employee at the roller rink, was fired for calling in sick on a rainy Monday morning. The manager assumed that John didn't want to ride the bus in the rain, so 2 days after John called in sick, he was replaced. In contrast, a second youth employed in a health spa negotiated an extended leave of absence from his job. Terry, however, had excellent skills due to his interests in body building and was a valued employee from the perspectives of the clientele and the management. Terry also had an outgoing personality and got along very well with his manager, Mark.

Young workers in the study employed small establishments did not have clearly defined duties. During one worksite observation, the observer saw a receptionist greeting customers and answering phones. During the second observation, the observer saw the receptionist mopping the floor and cleaning the restrooms. Many young workers complained that they never know what to expect and disliked these variations in their job. However, managers who provided youth with clearly defined duties, systematic training, and evaluation procedures made a significant contribution to that worker's potential for success on the job and reduced their turnover.

Clearly a major portion--almost 45 percent--of training in the adolescent worksite was performed by the new hire's co-workers. The new hires reported that a co-worker's contributions to their training was significant. Co-workers also had an important role in acclimating the new hire to the worksite. Despite their orientation and training, many youth entered the worksite from a school environment that did not encourage team learning situations. Although when team learning should be maximized in the last years of high school, it is

often considered cheating and students are penalized. Educators need to prepare youth for the school-to-work transition by encouraging more team-learning opportunities and modeling a true business environment in their classrooms. By doing this, educators could make a significant contribution to easing the school-to-work transition for the young work force.

When a new employee is hired, employers need to spell out the exact job duties of a position and the specific evaluation criteria. A thorough orientation and frequent feedback sessions also need to be provided for the adolescent worker if a successful employment period is expected. Employers have to recognize the environment from which most adolescent workers are emerging, namely school, and make an attempt to provide the support necessary to give youth a fair trial period to learn the rules of the workplace.

REFERENCES

Bishop, J. H. The Social Payoff from Occupationally Specific Training: The Employer's Point of View. Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1982

Burke, R. S.; Weitzel, W.; and Weir, T. "Characteristics of Effective Employee Performance Review and Development Interviews: Replication and Extension." Personnel Psychology 31 (1978):903-929.

Doyle, W. "Academic Work." In Review of Educational Research 53 (1983): 153-199.

King, L. H. "Student Thought Processes and the Expectancy Effect" (Research Report No. 80-1-8). Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: Center for Research in Teaching, The University of Alberta, 1980.

Landy, F. J.; Barnes, J. L.; and Murphy, K. R. "Correlates of Perceived Fairness and Accuracy of Performance Evaluations." In Journal of Applied Psychology 63 (1978):751-754.

Moore, D. T. "Discovering the Pedagogy of Experience." In Harvard Education Review 51 (1981):286-300.

_____. "Knowledge at Work: An Approach to Learning By Interns." Paper read at Becoming A Worker: A Symposium on Youth Work and Nonwork Experience, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 15 October, 1983.

Mount, M. "Comparisons of Managerial and Employee Satisfaction with a Performance Appraisal System." In Personnel Psychology 36 (1983):99-110.

Sieber, R. T. "Classmates as Workmates: Informal Peer Activity in the Elementary Schools." In Anthropology and Education Quarterly 10 (1979): 207-235.

CHAPTER 7

AUTHORITY RELATIONS IN ADOLESCENT WORKPLACES

by

Jane Reisman

As youth move out of schools into workplaces, a major transition occurs. They now have jobs to do. Technical skills are necessary, but they are not enough. Getting along with supervisors and managers and complying with rules in workplaces are also part of most jobs.

According to research, employers are likely to criticize young workers as a group for disregarding the workplace rules at work and for resisting supervision (Borman and Reisman, forthcoming; Hollenbeck and Smith 1984; Miguel 1984; Wilms 1983). Employers in Miguel's (1984) survey of employers in metropolitan labor markets stated that noncompliance with workplace rules was likely to result in immediate dismissal during early periods of employment. These employers' policies suggest that young workers deliberately reject the formal authority structure in workplaces.

A contrasting viewpoint posited by some social scientists argues that social relationships and rules in the workplace are complex and unevenly weighted against young workers (Corwin 1985; Wellman 1985). As a result, Corwin (1985) asserts that young workers generally lack an understanding of the principles of organizations and labor relations that can be transferred across settings such as schools and workplaces. The behavior patterns familiar to students do not necessarily transfer into workplaces. In particular, students need to learn how to recognize the sources of authority, see how authority is expressed differently by different supervisors and managers, and perceive how rigidly or flexibly rules are implemented. In other words, the transition from school to work entails learning how to deal with authority.

Acknowledgment: The author wishes to thank Kathryn M. Borman, Bruce McFarlane, William T. Pink, Robert Prus, David Wellman, and Michael Wilson for their comments on earlier versions.

Weber (1958; 1964), describes authority as "the legitimate right to exercise power." Although authority is a pervasive feature in modern social organizations such as families, schools, and workplaces, the ways that managers express authority in the workplace frequently differ from the way authority is expressed in schools and families. In general, managers find their authority vis a vis young people to be more tenable than do authority figures in other domains. It is more difficult for a teacher to expel a student or a parent to disown a child than for a manager to fire a young worker. Authority relationships in workplaces are therefore appropriately viewed as a new cognitive terrain for inexperienced young workers.

Observers of the educational scene have beey paying considerable attention to the authority relationships inside schools. Spady (1974), for example, has studied how teachers establish coercive control. Recent ethnographic accounts of schooling provide analyses of the extent to which students later teachers' authority by their disruptive behavior. Mertz (1979), in her research on junior high schools, describes how teachers often become preoccupied with maintaining order in schools. Willis (1977) studied the working class youth in secondary schools in England and discusses how youth in this class undermine teachers. McNeil (1983) reports that in secondary schools in the United States teachers often engage in "defensive teaching" to protect themselves from continual violation of their practices and rules.

Similarly, industrial sociologist and psychologists have studied authority in workplaces. Sociologists have been interested in the ways that power and resistance are expressed in industrial settings. (See Hall 1983 for an elaboration on a central this concern in sociological studies). Industrial psychologists are keenly interested in authority relationships between supervisors and employees and how these relationships affect motivation toward work. Ways to improve employees' attitudes toward work and, thus, enhance productivity are major concerns in this discipline (see, Steers and Porter [1983] for a comprehensive collection of articles in this area). Typically, both sociologists and psychologists have focused attention on the outcomes of social relationships pertaining to authority--that is, the expression of authority or reaction to authority--but little empirical attention has been given to the ways that employers and employees develop a relationship in the first place. Exceptions

are the work of Burawoy (1979), who in Manufacturing Consent, provides an exception to this statement as he describes assimilation into shop floor production practices among workers, and Wellman (1985), whose research on longshoremen, details how these workers learn to fit into their jobs. Attention to these processes is essential to the understanding of how youth come to terms with authority in work settings.

This chapter examines authority relationships in workplaces where young workers are employed. Classic descriptions of authority provided by Weber and Simmel direct attention to two questions:

- How is authority established by supervisors and managers?
- How is authority acknowledged by workers?

A sample consisting of 25 youths and a constellation of significant actors, including their managers, co-workers, friends, family members, and school personnel, were observed at work and interviewed in two Ohio cities between May 1983 and June 1984. These youth were between the ages of 18 and 21 at the time of the study and included both males (48 percent) and females (52 percent), and both whites (80 percent) and nonwhites (20 percent). None of these youths were in college or the military during the early period of the study, although some did pursue these courses after some months had elapsed. A single researcher was present in the workplace on the first day of a new job for these young people and continued observations for an average of two shifts per month thereafter. Strictly an observer, the researcher maintained a continuous log of the activities, interactions, and dialogues that unfolded during work shifts. Interviews were conducted during breaks and outside working hours. When youths left jobs, either through termination or resignation, the researchers continued to record the youths' experiences during periods of unemployment and/or subsequent employment.

The work settings in which the youth were employed included small retail businesses such as bakeries, gas stations, and coin shops; service industries such as banks, insurance headquarters, and health spas; and production plants such as sheet metal shops and metal parts manufacturers. The jobs in these businesses and industries included sales clerk, shop hand, waiter, cook, exercise trainer, and office worker. Interviews and observations conducted during

this study offered rich and detailed information about authority relations in adolescent workplaces.

Weber and Simmel on Authority

Authority contains an implicit power relationship between superordinates and subordinates. The presence and acceptance of authority are a means for maintaining control in such social organizations as workplaces, schools, prisons, and the family. We learn from the work of Weber that authority is a privilege vested in an office--not in a person. Authority is but the probability that a specific command will be obeyed (Weber 1964). Those persons who have positions of authority bear both a privilege and a challenge to enact this power.

The privilege of authority among officials in modern complex organizations, such as schools and workplaces, is supported by legal sanctions. Nevertheless, the cooperation of subordinates must be acquired. How individuals gain cooperation, or inspire obedience, relates to the type of social organization in which the power relationship occurs. Weber's ( ) typology of the bases of authority demonstrates this relationship between individual behavior and social structure. He identifies three different bases of authority: (1) traditional authority, (2) charismatic authority, and (3) rational-legal authority. These authority arrangements are briefly described as follows.

Charismatic authority occurs where there is the least amount of formal power and control available to its user. It is frequently characteristic of leaders in social movements. The Reverend Jim Jones was a charismatic leader, as was the Reverend Martin Luther King. Charisma motivates and stimulates a desire in the governed to follow orders and heed authority. However, a charismatic leader has no authority when no one is charmed.

Traditional authority is available to rulers when social control powers are strong. It is characteristic of leaders in early governance structures in which a royal family rules and stratification is indelibly etched into the social fabric: peasants are peasants, knights are knights, and kings are kings. In traditional authority structures, there is a mutual acceptance of stratification. Thus, traditional authority is not viable when the peasants aspire to be knights and the knights aspire to be kings.

Rational-legal authority is the hallmark of modern western civilization. It is presumably based on competence rather than--brawn or personality. Legal contractual understandings, acceptances, and enforcements of roles, rules, and regulations permit rational-legal authority to prevail. An underlying assumption is that we operate within a meritocratic system in which rewards are achieveable and granted according to performance. Rational-legal authority is not operative when the governed do not acknowledge the rules.

These bases of authority provide foundations of authoritative behavioral characteristics in different social structures. Whereas in theory, this typology identifies three distinct patterns of authority, pure forms of these arrangements are seldom captured in practice. Managers in modern bureaucracies, for instance, may find better results from charismatic leadership than from simply governing within a rational-legal framework. The typology is meant to be treated as a model or "ideal-type" scheme.

The variation in authority patterns is further explained by Simmel (1950). A contemporary of Weber, Simmel stresses the interactive quality of authority relationships between superordinates and subordinates. We are reminded that authority occurs through compliance by subordinates. This obedience displaces spontaneity; but more importantly, the subordinate actor exercises choice and human agency in relationship to the superordinate actor. According to Simmel's (1950) words, "For instance, what is called 'authority' presupposes, in a much higher degree than is usually recognized, a freedom on the part of the person subjected to authority. Even where authority seems to "crush" him, it is based not only on coercion or compulsion to yield to it."

The choice of an individual to submit to authority or to substitute obedience for spontaneity is affected by the balance of power in a particular situation. Like Weber, Simmel relates human interactions to the context in which they occur. Some relationships between superordinates and subordinates occur in contexts that allow one party significantly more freedom of choice than is possible for the other party to enjoy. Such is the case for a king and a peasant. Simmel refers to this type of relationship as "societas leonina" or association with a lion. In these instances, subordinates are treated as mere

means to ends, as insignificant beings. Spontaneity among subordinates is severely limited in these relationships in which advantage is one-sided.

This conception of authority guides the examination of how youth learn to manage authority in workplaces. Both the context in which authority occurs and the social exchange processes between superordinates and subordinates are important dimensions. Before turning to the workplace, we will consider some insights concerning authority relationships in schools will be considered.

Authority Relations in Schools

Spady (1974), in his review of literature concerning authority relations in schools, reexamines how authority is established in classrooms. A well-entrenched principle in teacher education emphasizes the importance of establishing respect early in the school year. Teachers are instructed to lay down the law with the students at the onset of the school year in order to gain control over the class. Spady contends that such an approach is based on some weighty but erroneous assumptions. First, authority is established at once and respected thereafter, and second, suggest strict assertion of the authority vested in a teacher's position provides a compelling basis for student discipline. Conspicuously absent from this approach is a recognition of the human agency of the students--that students must consent to be taught and be disciplined. A human relationship is addressed without recognizing the social and interactive nature of relationships. The ethnographic accounts of schooling by Metz and Willis redress this task.

Metz (1979), in her field research on authority in schools, examines the challenge of arranging the authority of day-to-day schooling. She asserts that a major aim of school management is to maintain order. Yet, order is fragile in the classroom and even more volatile in the corridors. In managing the conflicting goals of maintaining order and pedagogical activities, Metz observes that teachers cannot simply insist that students act in an orderly manner in schools. Instead, zones of freedom are established between teachers and students. Teachers and students test each others' wills to reach an equilibrium that allows the business of schooling to proceed. The zones of freedom that allow the equilibrium vary according to the characteristics of the student population. Metz found considerable negotiation of authority occurring in a

desegregated school where many youths did not accept the legitimacy of schooling. In this case, spontaneous behavior was more prevalent than obedience, making it difficult for teachers to uphold authority. Many students did not freely consent to the subordinate organizational role of student.

Willis' (1977) examination of working class youth in British secondary schools (1977) also reveals bargaining over roles between teachers and students. Using a class analysis, Willis asserts that many working class youth project a limited range of opportunities for themselves in the work-place. This negative view of the benefits of schooling promotes disruptive behavior in the classroom. Instead of prizing the virtues of learning, These youth use schools as forums in which to "have a laff." These "laffs" are often directed toward their obedient, well-socialized peers, the "earholes."

To maintain a semblance of control over these working class youngsters, teachers tolerate some resistant behavior. Willis, like Metz, reports that the rejection of the legitimate basis of schooling among some students reduces the probability that the authority vested in classroom teachers will be obeyed. Without the consent of students, authority has to be constructed, bargained, and negotiated not tacitly accepted as a premise of the teacher and student relationship.

Compulsion versus Consent

The fact that schooling is compulsory differentiates it from working. Subordinates in schools (students) are not participants of their own choosing, but subordinates in workplaces (workers) do exercise some choice. Within the constraints of a social and economic context, workers and employers mutually select each other. Understanding the relative freedom of voluntarily obtaining a job, in contrast to compulsory attendance at school, is important for understanding authority relations in these institutions.

The relative freedom in workplaces provides employers with a firmer basis for expecting deference to their authority than teachers and school managers (principals) have the cost of resistance, or spontaneous behavior, among workers can be termination from employment. Still, employers are faced with the challenge of establishing and implementing their authority to govern in the workplace. This challenge is especially relevant when workers are young and

consequently have limited experience in workplaces. To borrow Michael Buroway's phrase, employers must "manufacture consent" in young workers to their subordinate roles as employees.

According to Weber's typology, the rational-legal base of authority is present in contemporary organizations in western societies presupposes a shared acceptance of the governing rules by both superordinates and subordinates. Without this consent to subordination, traditional or charismatic approaches to management may become pragmatic. Indeed, legitimate power, namely authority, resides in bosses, but employees have the power to choose obedience or spontaneity from moment to moment at work.

The author's field study of newly hired adolescent workers provides the opportunity to analyze young people's involvements in authority relations. Numerous situations that addressed establishing authority and acknowledging authority unfolded during worksite observations and follow-up interviews. It is to these situations that we turn next.

Thematic Patterns

Since authority is a dominant feature of workplaces, authority relations inevitably developed between all the young workers and their employers. These relations were examined across different work settings in order to identify emergent patterns characterizing the authority relations. To identify those patterns, specific analytical questions were addressed, including the following: Who represents authority in workplaces? How predictable are managers? How rigidly are rules implemented? How are workplace rules enforced? How much similarity exists among authority figures in workplaces? How do young workers behave toward authority figures? To what extent do young workers comply with rules and procedures in workplaces? How much give and take is involved in the ways that young workers and their bosses relate to each other? This set of questions is based on the theoretical assumptions developed earlier--that authority is grounded in social structure yet is an interactive social relationship that must be consciously developed among the involved parties.

Two pervasive themes emerged from the wide array of cases included in this study. The first theme pertains to the tension between spontaneity and obedience in the development of authority relations. Young workers' entrance into

working is accompanied by their containment of spontaneous behavior. To some extent, the playfulness of youth must subside when the young cross over the workplace threshold. Whether it is the discipline of long and regular work shifts, a no-nonsense boss, strenuous performance requirements, or physical distancing from age-mates in adult-dominated work sites, young people come up against the tension between voluntary, willful 'spontaneous' behavior and regulated and externally sanctioned "obedience."

The second emergent theme characterizing authority relations involving adolescent workers is that although authority is not always readily recognized, it is inescapable. This theme relates to the ways that bosses utilize different approaches to motivate employees and implement workplace rules, practices, and performance standards. Despite the rational-legal basis of modern organizations, some individuals favor charisma or coercion over reason. This variability may occur for simple reasons such as personality differences in individuals, or for complex reasons such as levels of formalization in organizations. Regardless of the reason, youth learn to adjust to different types of bosses without underestimating the official power residing in these bosses. To a lesser extent, there is also some evidence that bosses adjust their managerial styles in the course of interacting with their employees.

To summarize, two thematic patterns characterize the development of authority relations among young workers:

- Young workers' entrances to working are accompanied by the containment of spontaneous behavior and
- Authority though not always readily recognizable in modern workplaces, is inescapable.

These themes will be explored using case illustrations from the work site observations and interviews. The discussion begins with a detailed case analysis of the early months of employment for a young mail clerk in a financial institution. Over a period of several months which included a succession of bosses, Roy made some deliberate adjustments in his understanding of authority and the way in which he related to superordinates.

Authority Relations in a Mail Room

Roy moved away from his rural home town to a metropolis 1 year after his high school graduation. Financial difficulties caused him to leave the regional college where he was enrolled as a business major following high school and to find employment. Roy first became employed in a temporary security job for a financial institution. When a permanent yet still part-time opening became available in the mail room, Roy applied and was hired. It wasn't until he was selected for the permanent slot that he received formal orientation.

Roy was formally introduced to the hierarchical and regulative scheme of the financial institution on the first day of his job in the mail room. He spent that morning in a training seminar for all unclassified new hires and spent the afternoon in the mail room. The rules of the workplace were presented in the training session--punctuality, attendance, and leaving personal problems at home. The privilege of managers was more subtly expressed in explaining differential salary scales. "It's not fair to pay the teller as much as we pay the manager . . . no matter how good that person is . . . or loyal. This may sound harsh, but many other companies do this, especially large companies . . . managers have college education, some experience, and are responsible for 25-40 people." This initial socialization experience instructed Roy in the rational-legal basis of authority in his employing organization. Such was the message provided by the organization's perpetuator of the authority structure, a training specialist.

Roy's initial experience in the mail room exemplifies a tension in superordinate and subordinate relationships in workplaces with a rational-legal structure. Whereas management would prefer that their authority be perceived as ubiquitous, employees have greater potential to behave more spontaneously in the absence of direct supervision. The initial work site observation depicts this conflict.

Roy had three bosses: Sal, the day supervisor; Pat, the night supervisor; and Len, the general manager, who was later replaced by Paul. The mail room crew varied from about 3 to 10 throughout multiple shifts. There were eight people present during Roy's first day on the job--the majority of whom were also adolescent workers. Sal, the day supervisor, had not been in at all

because of an assignment to jury duty, but the mail room crew appeared to be familiar enough with the task demands to carry on without direct instruction. These tasks consisted of sorting mail, processing mail through postage machines, receiving deliveries, and delivering mail inside and outside the building. In contrast to subsequent observations, there was a great deal of standing around, conversing, and bringing in snacks from an outside area.

Roy knew some of the employees, since he had held a temporary position in the security area prior to obtaining the mail room job. Co-workers guided him through the work activities throughout the afternoon, primarily showing him how to process mail through postage machines. When not given a specific job to do, Roy involved himself in conversations or sat on a vinyl-padded couch between the mail boxes and the processing machines. Shortly after 5:00 p.m., he finished his final task for the day and departed.

Following this initial observation, a discussion ensued between the department manager, Len, and the researcher. Len had walked into the mail room once during the 4-hour observation, exchanged some words with Pat, the night supervisor, and departed. Len introduced himself to the researcher at the conclusion of the work shift to provide some information. He wanted it known that the behavior in the mail room that day was more unruly than usual due to the absence of the day manager. No supervisor was present for the crew of young workers until Pat arrived late in the day. This manager heard reports (from unspecified sources) of excessive amounts of "off-task" activities. The workers had spent long breaks in the cafeteria and had taken long drives in the mail truck. Concerned that the new hire might get the wrong impression about conduct on the job, Len planned to address the crew the following day about their behavior. Otherwise, he feared that Roy might set up for failure. In his words, "I will be doing some yelling and screaming tomorrow. I don't want Roy to get the wrong impression and maybe lose his job."

Roy's experience on the first day of the job illustrates how relationships of authority are upheld or disavowed at work. This encounter supports Weber's (1978) portrayal of authority as a privilege that is vested in an office, not a person. If we add Simmel's concept, we see, further, that human agents who occupy offices must transmit authority.

Conversely, subordinates must acknowledge this power and elect to obey rules, practices, or direct commands. In business and industry, managers occupy the offices that hold authority. Without the presence of a manager in this work setting, the rules and regulations were not carefully observed by the youthful crew. Aware of this breakdown in the social order of the workplace, a higher level manager planned to intervene in order to assist in the new hire's adaptation to his new job. This departmental manager was concerned that the new hire might not otherwise understand the message that he wanted to deploy in the mail room; namely, that authority is ubiquitous and tenacious.

A third instance, a few months into employment, shows how Roy had begun to acknowledge the authority of his superordinates and had initiated some resistance to this control. According to Roy, the day and night supervisors were as different as day and night: the day supervisor, Sal, was "nice"; the night supervisor, Pat, was "evil." The day supervisor inspired devotion and hard work among Roy's work group through her charismatic approach to management: "The guys get the work done for her 'cause she's so nice." In contrast, the night supervisor stirred up wrath and venom "among mail crew members through her coercive managerial approach: "Pat yells at you and treats you like a little kid; people our age don't appreciate that."

Roy was subject to the authority of both supervisors after he was assigned to the position of mail deliverer and had to drive the mail truck on a prescribed route to make deliveries to bank offices. His work shift spanned the hours between 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. with this specialized assignment. The shift in supervisors occurred at 5:00 p.m.

Roy began his route in the main mail room at 2:30 and was expected to return there by 3:30. Following esentially the same route, he was to repeat his deliveries three more times in the afternoon. Roy often was able to accomplish his route in less than an hour. During the day supervisor's shift, Roy used this extra time talking with his co-workers who were stationed in the confines of the mail room as they did their jobs as sorters, processors, and receivers. The night supervisor did not tolerate small talk among the workers. If Roy returned early to the mail room, Pat would immediately assign him a filler job. Roy soon learned not to show up early. Instead, if he returned

early, he would sit in his truck outside the door listening to music. He did not voluntarily subject himself to her authority.

Indeed, avoidance was a practical way for this young worker to resist coercive supervision. In this vein, Roy's assignment to the delivery route was opportune. As he saw it, "I don't have to deal with the people in the mail room too much since I have the delivery route job. I'm glad I'm not in there." The multiple supervisors and prescribed accountability patterns (hourly cycles) surrounding Roy's job made authority more visible and powerful than some mail crew members had imagined. Roy's solution was to work hard for those who were charismatic and to attempt to avoid those who were coercive.

One other boss-employee relationship that developed during these observations shows a small but significant degree of flexibility and negotiation. This relationship involved Paul, who succeeded Len as general manager. Roy viewed Paul as "mean" when he first came on board. Pat perpetuated this image of the new manager. Roy reported that Pat had warned the crew to watch out because Paul was going to be "strict." An encounter between Roy and Paul concerning Roy's truck-driving behavior verified this strict image during Paul's first week as boss.

The observer was accompanying Roy as he drove the truck out of the parking lot. Crossing his path was co-worker Jerry, and Roy played with Jerry by pretending to run him down. This event was witnessed by manager Paul. The field observer recorded this scene as follows:

> We leave building 'C and Jerry is crossing the parking lot. Roy swerves and steps on the gas as if he is trying to hit Jerry. Both guys laugh. [Roy and Jerry talk briefly to each other and then Roy continues on.] Roy is going about 15 mph and doesn't slow down for the speed bump. He passes an older, stocky man. Roy waves and the man waves back with a kind of strange look on his face. [Roy tells the observer that he is the new manager, Paul.]

Following this delivery route, Roy returns to the mail room and is immediately summoned by Pat. The following is recorded in the field notes:

> Pat: "I've got to talk to you."
> Roy: "OK," and begins to walk down the hall to make his building C deliveries.

Pat: "Paul saw you playing around with the truck. Pat continues, "On your last run Paul saw you playing around."
Roy: "I waved at him . . . . "
Pat: "He also saw you swerve and chase Jerry."
Roy: "Oh, that."
Pat: "Well, Paul wants me to warn you. He said you could be taken off this job, or possibly taken off the entire bank job if he sees that again."
Roy: "OK."
Pat turns around and goes back to the mail room. Roy finishes his deliveries looking very sullen. When he returns (to the mailroom), he motions to Jerry who then joins him outside. Roy tells him about the incident. Jerry tells him that he got into trouble also for not signing in and leaving the keys in the bank car (a common practice among the crew). Jerry and Roy discuss how strict Paul is. Roy concludes, "I'm not going to be here long" (12/16/83).

The dialogue between the young co-workers revealed a mutual recognition on the part of these subordinates of the coercive approach to management that Paul was attempting to establish. They clearly felt the implicit threat that they must conform to his rules or else they would be fired. This message was administered by him and also extended by his assistant, Pat, without providing an explanation or a forum for understanding the rules through reason (rational-legal authority). The young workers perceived Pat's style to emphasize management through punishment (traditional authority), as opposed to management through reason (rational legal-authority).

This traditional approach to management was particularly problematic when the young workers did not share an understanding of what acceptable behavior looked like to their new boss. Roy had made no attempt to hide his playful behavior in the truck. Although this spontaneity was completely unacceptable to Paul, Roy was not purposefully being disobedient. He simply was naive about the disciplinary climate, rules, and practices that Paul maintained.

Roy had already adopted an avoidance approach to the coercive managerial style of Pat. Similarly, he planned to remove himself from Paul's control as shown in the conversation between the observer and Roy that occurred on the next delivery commute. Here is the excerpt from the field notes:

Researcher: "What do you think of your new boss?"
Roy: I think he is worse than Len (former manager). I mean you can be strict but that's just too strict. We're not little kids. I mean looking at our time sheets. We're not going to cheat. I guess that's what he thinks. I mean we come in at 2:40 and we'll sign in at 2:30.
Roy: (brings up the subject of keys) "I mean they have been doing this for years (leaving the keys in the bank vehicle while making a delivery) and no one has stole no cars, now this guy comes out and he thinks everyone is a thief."
Researcher: "So how are you going to deal with this guy?"
Roy: "Stay away from him. That way he can't do nothing" (12/16/83).

Although the former manager, Len, had tried to convey to the mail room crew that authority was omnipresent, Roy recognized that authority was implemented by individuals. By escaping visual purview of authority figures, he also hoped to escape the ramifications of officialdom.

Over the next few weeks, Roy and his co-workers tried to distance themselves from the new manager. On December 19, Roy reported that he had heard rumors to the effect that Paul didn't think the crew liked him. Roy commented, "This is true and you can put my name on the top of the list."

Adjustments in Authority Relations

But close to one month later Paul called a meeting of the mail room crew that had a major impact on the crew's response to his authority. Paul reviewed his rules and rationale about such practices as leaving keys in cars and violating scheduling procedures and established formal times for employees' breaks. In general, he attempted to explain some of his policies and to show their implications to the staff. Roy responded favorably to this meeting that, for the first time, allowed him to view this manager empathetically. In Roy's terms, the manager became "nice," but in Weber's typology, the manager had become more rational-legal and less traditional. The following interview from the field notes affords these insights:

Researcher: "How did he approach the meeting?"
Roy: "He was really telling us rules."
Researcher: "He was telling you rules? Were these some rules that you already knew and some new ones?"
Roy: "Yeah, he was just telling us to be more careful about driving because a manager or something once got kidnapped."

Researcher: "Do they want the people who are out on the road to use more security?"

Roy: "Yeah, like if you see somebody and they look suspicious you know, don't take our stuff out, just call the guard and tell him there's someone out there who looks suspicious."

Researcher: "Uh, huh, have you ever had cause for alarm yourself?"

Roy: "That's it, because I never really even worried about it" (12/16/83).

For Roy, being permitted to know the reason for the rules created a turning point for his acceptance and acknowledgement of authority. The mail crew was not simply being scolded about leaving keys in the vans for the sake of punishment--there was a legitimate reason given for this rule. When Paul convened the employees to discuss rules and the rationales for them, he brought rationality into his approach to managerial authority. Such an approach made him a more legitimate leader to the mail crew and improved their acknowledgement of his authority.

Some small degree of negotiation is also evident in the construction of this relationship between Paul and Roy. Although there was no direct discourse concerning who was boss or how bosses behave and employees behave, Paul had somehow become alerted to the negative impact he had on the crew through his early dictums. Recall that Roy and the other crew members had responded to his coercive rule through withdrawal. Paul's meeting provided a forum to allow reason or rational-legal authority to prevail. Furthermore, this approach effectively inspired Roy and others to consent to meeting this manager's expectations for employees.

In essence, Paul's authority never diminished; he simply altered his management strategy. The attempts of Roy and the others to remain outside Paul's line of vision had helped them avoid confrontations prior to this adjustment. But their avoidance was obtained only by the young workers curtailing their behavior through constraining their spontaneity--an outcome that Paul found desirable as well. Paul's meeting did, however, relieve the tension that had begun building inside the mail room. Without such action, over time, Paul may have been faced with the necessity of firing some of the resisters, or of sustaining a conflict-ridden mail room.

The thematic patterns earlier identified are continuously woven throughout this account: the containment of spontaneity and the inescapable character of

authority in the workplace. In fact, these central themes are themselves closely related, as is especially evident in the playful truck incident. It was while Roy was engaged in playful behavior in the course of commuting on his mail delivery route that he was observed by his manager and unwittingly risked losing his job. Following the reprimand for this act, Roy grew more cautious about his behavior and defensively avoided in-person contact with his boss.

Accounts involving other young workers further demonstrate the tension between spontaneity, behaving as one wishes, and obedience, subjugating one's will to the rule structure of others. These accounts tend to show that youths lack familiarity with rules and practices acceptable to specific managers.

The Tension between Spontaneity and Obedience

Like Roy, a young man employed as a clerk in a small coin and stamp store upset his employers during his early period of employment. For instance, Rod had difficulty in maintaining his scheduled hours for working on a regular basis. As one example, Rod was disappointed when his request to come in late to work following Independence Day was denied. He perceived that this denial would put a damper on his plans for celebrating the holiday into the late hours of the night. In another example, Rod infuriated the assistant manager by showing up when the store opened instead of 15-30 minutes earlier. This assistant manager had earlier stressed to Rod that it would be a good idea to come in early. It wasn't until the assistant manager told him that he must arrive earlier that Rod adjusted his schedule. Three men worked in this store: Justin, the manager; Chuck, the assistant manager; and Rod. Considerable attention was paid to the personal well being of this young worker, often making it difficult to see a prescribed form developing between superordinate and subordinate roles.

In contrast to Roy's experience in the mail room of a large, complex organization, both roles and rules in the small shop seemed arbitrary and flexible. Justin expected Rod to develop a sense of loyalty to him and to take initiative in learning the business, a relationship that was more fitting to a charismatic structure than a rational-legal one. While Rod appreciated that his job compared favorably to those held by friends employed in fast-food establishments and "dead-end" organizations, he was reticent about taking on too much responsibility. Instead, he looked for opportunities to lighten up

the job when they presented themselves--chatting with customers and friends who visited or staring out the window at the pedestrian and automobile traffic. After the passage of several months, Justin despairingly reassessed his approach to training Rod. He mused that he would have to become more directive because Rod was not showing an eagerness to wait on customers, learn how to stock the store, and acquire other skills on his own. Essentially, Justin wished to move forward with the process of replacing spontaneity with obedience in young Rod.

In contrast to Roy and Rod, other examples show that many youth place constraints on their spontaneity. These youth have taken to heart the warnings of teachers, parents, job developers, and others who suggest that the world of work is a serious business. Expecting that work is part of the adult world, which is defined by rules and responsibilities, these young workers impose a strict adherence to tasks and orders on themselves. One young shop hand, Al, exemplified this self-imposed obedience. Observations of Al's 8 hour shift making ducts in a sheet metal shop repeatedly showed that Al worked continuously and silently. Even when co-workers initiated conversations, Al uttered single word responses and did not interrupt his work tasks. This approach to work stands in stark contrast to his behavior at school. The researcher was surprised to learn that Al's vocational shop teacher had been concerned about Al's tendency to converse with his classmates during class lessons and with his lack of enthusiasm toward class projects. For Al, the workplace presented an authority structure that he accepted in a way he never accepted for school. He began reserving his play behavior for evenings and weekends, which he usually spent either at his girlfriend's house or out drinking with his friends.

A young office worker, Miriam, employed as a clerk in a bank, also figured that workplaces were serious places. Miriam obtained her job with the assistance of a job development program that attempts to indoctrinate its participants with a willingness to work and respect for the rules of work. Miriam felt fortunate to have this job, which she perceived as "clean" compared to the dirty factory work performed by her mother. To demonstrate her commitment to the job, Miriam kept to herself and did little to interact with her co-workers. To her surprise and dismay, her attitude was perceived as negative by her

supervisor. She simply did not appear to enjoy her work in the eyes of her employers.

Al and Miriam demonstrated a zealous adherence to the formal authority structure of work by keeping a continual pace and restraining from playful behavior on the job. Ironically, in Miriam's case, this reaction to authority was detrimental. By viewing spontaneity and obedience as mutually exclusive, she resolved the tension between these behaviors by ruling spontaneity out, thereby cutting herself off from co-workers and supervisors, who never came to know her as an individual. Most young workers tend to engage in spontaneous behavior more frequently. However, it is difficult for them to determine just how much spontaneity is permissible in their work places.

The Inescapable Character of Authority

In addition to resolving issues related to spontaneity as opposed to task orientation, during the course of becoming workers, young people must eventually recognize the character of authority. Although some supervisors adjust their approaches to management when they meet resistance from their staff, as did the mail room general manager, the privilege of authority does not diminish even with these adjustments. Al's co-worker Charles was fired ostensibly for resisting rules concerning absences and grooming. Charles was surprised since he did not believe his behavior to be insubordinate. Moreover, all of the incidents of firing came as a surprise to the young workers who experienced this managerial prerogative. During the first 6 months of the study, 9 terminations occurred (Borman and Reisman, forthcoming). These dismissals were most frequently cited by their supervisors as related to the inability of young people to comply with specific work practices. Those young people affected by these dismissals, in direct contrast to their employers, regarded the authority structures as being excessively rigid. Unfortunately, those people who were dismissed and out of work had not anticipated their imminent dismissals well enough in advance to seek other employment. In 2 of these cases, subsequent periods of unemployment lasted for over 6 months!

Although several incidents of dismissal occurred among the youths, employers generally were reluctant to fire the young workers. The dismissal of an employee sets up frustrations for managers, and may be viewed by some managers

as a sign of their own failure. For instance, Brian a manager of an administrative unit in a corporate headquarters, expressed these sentiments. This manager dismissed a young clerical worker for unsatisfactory performance after 1 year on the job. Rather than seeking help with difficult tasks, this young clerical worker had allowed the tasks to accumulate on her desk while she attended to the work that she could adequately perform. Her manager was dismayed that the young woman was reluctant to obtain help from him or her coworkers. He assumed that she feared exposing her ignorance. When Brian hired this worker's replacement, Val, the young worker's understudy, he made unusually vigorous attempts to offer Val the assistance she needed and to make himself approachable.

Lupton (1976) has pointed out that managers confront a dilemma in their attempts to establish authority. In the context of factory production work, Lupton noted that employees are condemned for their failures to comply with managerial expectations, but that managers feel frustrated in their failure to plan and control employee behavior. As Lupton surmises, "It might well appear to them [managers] as if they have failed to demonstrate technical competence, and that the legitimacy of their authority is being called into question"(p. 180). Yet in the final analysis, for young entry-level workers, dismissal is more likely to result from a conflict over compliance with authority structures than for other reasons. Given the recent entrance of youth to workplace involvements, managers have a ready explanation for difficulties encountered in authority relations.

Indeed, youth may find themselves particularly restricted by workplace rules and the authority of managers in their entry periods of employment. The propensity of managers to expect deficiencies in work performance and "attitude" among young people often contributes to a manager's keeping a close eye on young workers' performance. In one instance, at a fast-food restaurant, two young waitresses gathered around a newly hired worker who appeared in need of help. The manager, assuming that his employees were simply wasting time, was upon the waitresses in a matter of seconds to break up their conference. The privilege of "strategic leniency," a term used by Gouldner (1964) to describe a manager's discretionary use of leniency toward workers who have earned trust or recognition, does not apply in the case of young workers. If strategic leniency operated in adolescent workplaces, a late arrival of 3 minutes

would not have counted as a major infraction for Betsy. In contrast, the more senior representative stationed alongside Betsy smoked cigarettes continuously throughout her work shift, despite office policy prohibiting smoking. This senior worker had not escaped entirely from the jurisdiction of the workplace rules; she simply had been awarded some leniency in her authority relations.

Conclusion and Educational Implications

The inescapable nature of authority relations in workplaces demands that young workers develop some recognition of the rules and practices that operate in these settings. Even in those contexts in which where managers are unable to enforce their workplace standards--as in the case of the unsupervised mail room, managers attempt to construct an image of the ubiquity of supervision. Managers utilize varied approaches to supervision: charisma, coercion, and reason. These variations do not seem related to differences in work settings. The three superordinates in Roy's mail room, for instance, used quite dissimilar strategies in overseeing their workers. The location of this mailroom in the complex organization of a financial institution would suggest a rational-legal approach to authority. Yet, the managers were not predisposed to use this approach and developed coercive and charismatic means just as readily. The rational-legal approach became uniformly most effective with the young workers because they had not initially been told the reasons behind the rules they were expected to respect. In another setting, the coin and stamp store, the manager eventually decided to become more coercive with his young employee because he was not obtaining the results he wanted through reason or persuasion.

It is also apparent that authority relations are changeable. Youth adjust to rules and practices either through greater compliance or through greater resistance, both of which hamper spontaneity. Managers, too, make adjustments, but with the intention of increasing cooperation among young employees. There was no evidence of negotiation between young workers and managers that resulted in relaxed standards or increased flexibility. The numerous instances of termination that managers attributed to young workers' failure to respect the rules and comply with practices affirm the strength of managerial authority in workplaces.

Simmel's phrase "societas leonina" aptly describes the unbalanced relationship between young workers and their bosses. Structural supports, affording managers far greater power, buttress this imbalance. The labor market opportunity structure for young workers is limited, with most jobs available in the secondary market (e.g., health spas, fast-food restaurants, and so on) and at the entry level. Also, unemployment rates for the young, especially nonwhites are substantially higher than the rates for older age groups. These structural factors coupled with a negative social-psychological predisposition on the part of employers to expect an inadequate performance from young workers increases the plight of young workers. Since managers are especially wary about their young employees; respect for authority structures and since market opportunity structures are limited, young workers have only a narrow margin for resistance or insubordination in workplaces. Insubordination is a frequent outcome of young workers' general ignorance of the workplace.

The enactment and recognition of authority are best understood as a set of voluntary and intentional social actions: Young people must purposefully comply with managerial directions in order for authority structures to be upheld and for business to move forward as usual. In view of the purposeful quality in authority relations, it seems that schools should be able to help prepare young people for the authority relations they will face in workplaces. However, this expectation from schools--that they serve as agents in easing the transition from school to work--has its proponents and its adversaries.

The most vocal group of proponents of the view that schools should take an active role in preparing young people for work is the vocational education community. Since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, the vocational curriculum track has been part of American public education. Originally, vocational education supported programs in the occupational areas of trade and industry, agriculture, and home economics to correspond to the work force needs in the early part of the century. Reforms have been concerned with instruction in career awareness and development, job search skills, and, most recently, vocational ethics. It is this last area, vocational ethics, that relates to authority relations. Curricular materials, including both books and computerized modules, instruct students in learning normative rules of working and in gaining a respect for superordinates. Students get high grades when they

master the "proper" attitudes toward work as shown by reporting for work on time and as scheduled, following directions, sharing problems with supervisors, being careful with a company's property, and telling the truth.

The 1980s have witnessed a proliferation of partnerships between business and education to develop additional ways for schools to prepare young people for work. A typical part of these programs is a concern for introducing students "to the performance and attitudinal requirements of the workplace" (Spring 1985). Some analysts are concerned that the close relationship between education and business may mean that students learn the specific interests of business and industry at the expense of a broader understanding of social, political and economic processes. Spring (1985), for instance, describes this dilemma as follows:

> Employers might be happy with the schools determining whether or not a person is a compliant worker, but it does not forbode much good for the quality of our future society if this becomes a major goal of socialization within the public schools. A society of people with proper attitudinal requirements for the workplace might be one that has lost its inventive and dynamic qualities.

Additionally, the target students of many of the recent job development partnerships are central city youth who are predominantly from lower income groups and are nonwhite. A limited emphasis on skill learning in these job development programs may result in improved adaptability to workplaces among program participants, but it may also lead to restricted capabilities of movement beyond entry-level employment.

Schools also have informal ways of conveying authority relations to students. As do all complex organizations, school systems design their own internal opportunity structure and sanctions that operate within the system. This opportunity structure is the curricular tracking system. Critics of curricular tracking point out that an indirect consequence of this system is the construction of a hidden curriculum or paracurriculum of schooling. This paracurriculum places a greater emphasis on obedience to rules and respect for the authority of office in the nonacademic tracks than in the academic, college preparatory classes. Since curricular tracks may correspond closely to the socioeconomic status of students, in effect, obedience may be emphasized among students from lower economic classes who will be assuming a subordinate roles

in workplaces at an earlier point in their lives than will their college-bound classmates in the upper academic tracks.

Whether one examines the workplace-related formal curriculum or similar informal curricular programs in schools, there are some notable differences in people's experiences associated with socioeconomic variables. Certainly, schools alone cannot be expected to remedy inequality in society, but neither are they expected to perpetuate or intensify inequality. How then can schools help students become better equipped for dealing with authority relations in workplaces without simultaneously teaching students from the lower socio-economic groups to be docile, compliant, and unquestioning?

One constructive suggestion has been recently proposed by Ronald Corwin (1985). It is Corwin's thesis that work skill levels in workplaces may have become technically downgraded in some jobs but that organizational skills have become increasingly difficult to master. By organizational skills Corwin means such abilities as understanding how organizations work, how authority is implemented, and how and why rules are administered. A sufficient body of generalized knowledge about organizational structures and processes has been developed and can be incorporated into the curriculum of secondary schools. Ironically, this body of knowledge is a standard part of the specialized training of managers. The exposure of students to a body of systematic knowledge about organizations would provide a basis for their better-informed participation in authority relations in workplaces.

The young clerk in the coin and stamp shop commented that high school had been a "game" to him but that the workplace was "a lot different." Once this new entrant to the labor force becomes more familiar with the actors at work, the rules--both formal and informal rules, how divisions relate to the organization as a whole, and how decisions are made, he may change his view. Meanwhile, this young worker must, on his own, attempt to determine how to please his boss while maintaining his personal integrity.

REFERENCES

Borman, K. M., and Reisman, J., eds. Becoming a Worker. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, forthcoming.

Buraway, M. Manufacturing Consent. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Corwin, R. "Organizational Skills and the 'Deskilling Hypothesis'". In Becoming A Worker, edited by K.M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, forthcoming.

Gouldner, A. W. Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy. London: Collier-MacMillan, 1964.

Hall, R. H. "Theoretical Trends in the Sociology of Occupations." The Sociological Quarterly 24 (1983): 6-23.

Hollenbeck, K., and Smith, B. Selecting Young Workers: The Influence of Applicants' Education and Skills on Employability Assessments by Employers. Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1984.

Lupton, T. "Shop Floor Behavior." In Handbook of Work, Organization and Society, edited by R. Dubin. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1976.

McNeil, L. M. "Defensive Teaching and Classroom Control." In Ideology and Practice in Schooling, edited by M. W. Apple and L. Weiss. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983.

Metz, M. H. Classrooms and Corridors: The Crisis of Authority in Desegregated Secondary Schools. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

Miguel, R. J., and Foulk, R. C. Youth's Perceptions of Employer Standards: Effects of Employee Outcomes and Employer Evaluations. Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1984.

Simmel, G. The Sociology of Georg Simmel. Translated by K. H. Wolff. New York: The Free Press, 1950.

Spady, W. "The Authority System of the School and Student Unrest: A Theoretical Explanation." In Uses of the Sociology of Education, edited by C. W. Gordon. Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1974.

Spring, J. "The Government and the Schools: The New Partnerships." In Becoming A Worker, edited by K.M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, forthcoming.

Steers, R. M., and Porter, L. W. Motivation and Work Behavior. New York: McGraw Hill, 1983.

Weber, M. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, translated by H. Gerth and C. W. Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Weber, M. "The Three Types of Legitimate Rule." In Complex Organizations: A Sociological Reader, translated by H. Gerth and edited by A. Etzioni. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984.

Wellman, D. "Learning at Work: The Etiquette of Longshoring." In Becoming A Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, forthcoming.

Willis, P. Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs. Westmead: Saxon House, 1977.

Wilms, W. W. "The Limited Utility of Vocational Education: California Employers' Views." In Public Affairs Report (Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley) 24 (1983): 1-7.

CHAPTER 8

QUITS AND FIRINGS AMONG ADOLESCENT WORKERS

by

Jane Reisman and Kathryn Borman

High rates of joblessness and short episodes of employment among young workers are generally considered alarming in a society that values full employment. Workers under the age of 25 have accounted for up to 50 percent of total unemployment in recent years. Youth alone have constituted up to 25 percent of all unemployed workers (Feldstein and Ellwood 1982). The average length of time on the job for workers under the age of 25 has been 9.6 months, a figure that is less than one-third the amount of time on the job for the next closest age group (Horvath 1982). An examination of quits and firings permits a unique vantage point for examining the phenomena of joblessness and job changing among young workers.

Sociologists and others have approached the subject of job leaving by studying career patterns through a focus on work aspirations, family characteristics, and educational achievement and attainment. The mediating influence of workplace experience has received relatively less attention. In fact, much can be learned from studying the ways in which work organizations affect career plans and career mobility. Youth general inexperience with the institution of working makes them especially vulnerable to organizational pressures and constraints since workplaces represent a new institutional terrain.

We propose that conditions under which youth quit jobs are related to how they are treated on the job. In addition, we suspect youth are fired from jobs when they fail to adopt the norms of the workplace. The extent to which youth become acquainted with and assimilated into workplace routines can be expected to affect job-leaving behavior. Thus, a close examination of the "intervening variable" of work experience is necessary to understand the connections between aspirations, family background, and education on the one hand and labor market mobility on the other.

BACKGROUND

Employers are likely to hold to the stereotype that young workers are undesirable employees. The values and behaviors of young workers are viewed suspiciously by employers, a view that influences both their hiring and their firing decisions. Numerous surveys of employers reveal their general perception that adolescent workers are deficient in critical employability attitudes and skills such as a willingness to work and an understanding of the demands of workplaces (Hollenbeck and Smith, 1984; Miguel and Foulk 1984; Murphy and Jenks, 1982). In commenting on this issue, Shapiro (1983) notes, "Many employers see young people as sporadic workers who will stay on the job only long enough to attain short-term goals". As a result, fewer than one-third of the employers in the United States seriously consider hiring someone under the age of 21 for a full-time position (Sorrentino 1981). Given this stance, one suspects that young workers are granted less of the benefit of the doubt in both hiring and firing decisions than would be the case for workers in other age groups.

Sociologists understand this negative predisposition on the part of employers as an aspect of youths' difficulties with their own "organizational socialization." According to Van Maanen (1976), organizational socialization refers to the process by which a person learns the values, norms, and required behaviors that permit him to participate as a member of the organization. At its best, organizational socialization results in the matching or melding of individuals and organizational pursuits. At its worst, the process may lead to rejection by the individual of the expressed requirements of the organization (1976). Young workers' relative inexperience in workplaces suggests that organizational socialization is a particularly difficult process for this group of workers. Young people are simply less experienced and therefore more ignorant about the values, norms, and required behaviors inside workplaces. The willingness of employers to take responsibility for easing the process of socialization is apparently low, considering the reluctance of employers to hire young people in the first place.

Although it is obvious that young people, as a group, are less attuned to workplace norms than those workers who are older and more experienced, it is

not obvious that their values and behaviors are at odds with work values. It is primarily surveys of employers that repeatedly lead us to this conclusion. However, those studies that examine young people's attitudes toward work suggest that findings reported in employer surveys should be tempered by other data. Consider, for instance, the findings from two important studies conducted on nationally representative samples of employees. Both studies explored work attitudes but used two different measures of values, one sociological and one economic.

The sociological analysis was conducted by Kallenberg and Loscocco (1983) using data from the Quality of Employment Survey, a study that utilizes a representative sample of the employed civilian labor force between 1972-1973. Kalleberg and Loscocco explore the basic relationship between age and job satisfaction. Although it has been consistently shown that job satisfaction increases with age, the reasons for this relationship are still not fully understood. Kalleberg and Loscocco find a telling explanation in their comparison of job rewards and work values. They find that younger workers are more concerned with intrinsic and financial rewards than are their elders. Intrinsic rewards include the degree of challenge, meaning, and fulfillment obtained from work. Financial rewards relate to the "goodness" of pay, job security, and benefits from the job. Ironically, these rewards become increasingly available with age (although not in a strictly linear pattern). Younger workers simply have fewer financial and occupational resources than do older workers. The dissatisfaction among young workers thus relates to the difference between values and rewards that are available to different age groups in the workplace. Young workers want more out of work, particularly in the areas of challenge, meaning, and fulfillment, than what they see as currently available to them. It would be inaccurate, however, to view these values as being oppositional to working.

The second study is based on data from the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience. In one set of analyses, Borus (1981) considered the willingness of youth to work in consideration of various rates of pay. Borus reports that large proportions of youth across race and gender categories were willing to accept work at less than the minimum wage. This desire to work was especially strong among black and Hispanic minority youth when compared with their white counterparts. Since joblessness is especially

high among minority youth, this interest in jobs paying salaries below minimum wage is important information. It certainly refutes the popular notion that better financial opportunities in the "underground economy" is the major factor in luring these youth from the civilian labor market. Borus argues that their eagerness to gain work experience has been underestimated in previous studies of young workers.

These studies highlight the enormous differences between employers' views of young workers and the ways young workers see themselves. It is these differences in perceptions that make the proposition of analyzing the work organization so critical. We can assume that job-leaving behavior relates to workplace socialization processes. Job-leaving, both voluntary and involuntary, is likely to be less pronounced in workplaces where young workers identify with their workplaces and feel rewarded by their opportunities.

Past Research

Several studies have analyzed job-changing behavior among young people. Although most attention has been paid to job searches, some relevant work on job leaving is also available. Four of these studies will now be reviewed.

Blau and Kahn (1981) examined the "quit" behavior among young adults using data from the 1969-1972 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. They found the central consideration in job shifts among young workers was the opportunity for training in the workplace. Those youth who quit their jobs and gained subsequent employment improved their earnings and/or their long-term earning prospects and gained more experience and training in their new jobs. This relationship held up across racial and gender groups. Unfortunately, Blau and Kahn could not analyze the experiences of those youth who quit without obtaining subsequent employment. But among those who became reemployed, quitting was a means of upward mobility. It led to better jobs and financial rewards. Also, quit rates were lowest in cases where job characteristics enhanced the development of skills.

Maizels (1970) conducted intensive interviews with a sample of 330 school leavers under the age of 18 who lived in an industrial suburb of London in 1965. Maizels found that girls tended to remain in their jobs slightly longer than boys--6.5 months for girls and 5.5 months for boys. But among both sexes, jobs were more likely to be terminated voluntarily by the young job

holder rather than to be left involuntarily through a dismissal. The reasons for quitting jobs were varied although a central concern was the negative features of the job. In considering the 283 jobs that youth left, Maizels found that the most common reasons given for job leaving were dislike of the job itself; dissatisfaction with pay; dislike of employer, supervisor, or co-workers (especially among the girls); desire for a better job; dissatisfaction with training or prospects; and dissatisfaction with working conditions. Among those cases where youth were fired (about 25 percent of the incidents), youth explained job leaving in terms of redundancy, unsuitability, or disciplinary actions. Retrospectively, these job changers were not always pleased with their decisions. Many found themselves in other jobs where they did similar work or experienced even less satisfaction or training opportunities. Maizels' findings in comparison to those of Blau and Kahn are less optimistic so far as youth job mobility is concered. However, the selective characteristics of Maizels' sample, school leavers under the age of 18, undoubtably help to explain the constrained opportunities available to the young people in her study.

Osterman (1980) provides related data on job leaving based on his study of young men aged 16-26 who were not enrolled in school and who lived in 1 of 2 Boston communities, a highly visible black community and a white working class community. In 1976 and 1977, Osterman interviewed 131 young men, school officials, employment and training staff members, and employers. One of Osterman's findings was that quit rate sharply declined with age among all youth in the study. As a baseline to this finding, Osterman consulted a larger data set. His review of the National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) data for 1969-1970 indicated that although out-of-school 18-year-olds had an annual quit rate of .65, or slightly more than 1 out of every 2 workers, this figure was more than halved to .29 for older working youth, aged 27. Osterman further tested the job stability of these NLS quits to understand the extent to which people stayed in the same job but moved to a position in a different industry. Again, age was a major factor. Between the ages of 16-18, less than half the sample for both races was stable, remaining in the same job for a period of a year or more, but close to 80 percent of those youth between the ages of 26-28 continued in their jobs for a comparable period of time. Another question posed by Osterman was, "Does early stability affect later stability?" He found that the response was conditional. Up to a point, age 20 for whites and age 26 for blacks, early

instability did not significantly affect later stability. However, the chances of settling into a stable career pattern were reduced once the predicted turning point was passed.

Osterman settles on the concept of stages to explain youth's job leaving behavior. He refers to early instability as a "moratorium stage" that coincides with employers' views of youth in terms of a short-term orientation toward jobs. This period is followed by "settling-down" behavior, a stage characterized by less quitting, longer job tenure, and a steadier commitment to the job and labor force. The major exception to the stage pattern are those youth who found jobs through family contacts. Osterman attributes this greater stability to a behavior control when recruitment occurs through family networks. This explanation of career development relies heavily on life cycle and family characteristics, but not exclusively so. Osterman also pays considerable attention to the nature of the jobs available to youth. The jobs held during the moratorium stage are typically undemanding jobs in the secondary labor market. Only as youth age do they occupy jobs that involve long-term prospects for advancement, training opportunities, and greater job security--those jobs identified by economists as primary jobs.

It is Osterman's observation that firms offering primary jobs are reluctant to hire young adolescent workers because of the unstable employment patterns of these youth. The circular nature of this relationship is obvious. Youth are relegated to secondary, low-opportunity jobs that provide less-attractive options for long term employment. So long as employers are reluctant to invest in the training of an unstable "work population," they contribute to the creation of a group at risk.

Finally, Shapiro's (1983) analysis of job-leaving behavior will be considered. This study relies on analyses of the National Longitudinal Survey for 1978-1979. Four groups of responses were selected to address the ques-tion of why youth leave jobs. Responses fell into the following clusters: (1) involuntary separations (including layoffs and firings); (2) quits for economic reasons (better jobs, employment conditions or wages); (3) quits when work interfered with school; and (4) other reasons. Job leaving was primarily attributed to involuntary terminations and quits, which together accounted for 30 percent of the responses. Slightly more than 20 percent of the responses

related to interference with school. Layoffs were most common among the 16-year-olds who were often employed in fixed duration employment programs. Economic reasons for job changing became decreasingly important as youth grew older. Both short term wages and working conditions paled in their importance to older youth alongside their marked preference for more fullfilling, long-term jobs. Shapiro also found that both less well educated youth and black youth, in particular, were less likely to quit jobs in search of better economic prospects than were their more educated or white counterparts.

Shapiro (1983) emphatically concludes that youth are not job-hoppers. Sixty-five percent of the youth worked at least three quarters of the year. Furthermore, 45 percent of the sample held the same job over the course of the year. This number would have been even higher if those females who left jobs to have children were excluded. Young women were only half as likely as the men to have worked at all during 1978. Many of those women who did not work had also left school to have children. Results of this analysis, similar to the conclusions drawn by Osterman, reinforce the notion that the effects of the workplace play an important role in the career patterns of youth.

Past research has emphasized employer attitudes toward job leaving and the economic consequences of mobility. The present study analyzes a rather different dimension of job leaving. This dimension is derived from an analysis of the comparative views of youth and their employers. Through the methods of field research we were able to observe job changes as they were taking place. Relationships established with young workers, their supervisors, and others provide the opportunity for intensive analysis of the factors contributing to job leaving. The proposition introduced earlier, that organizational socialization is a major issue in job leaving among young workers, is considered in this analysis. Before turning to a discussion of the individual cases, the methods used in this study will be discussed.

Leaving a Job

Young employees either leave jobs by quitting or by being fired. Other reasons for leaving jobs, such as mortality, or layoff due to seasonal work, or reduction in forces, were not at issue in the study and therefore remain unexamined. Both quits and firings are analyzed in this section and will be

referred to as "job passages." First, we will consider the nature of these shifts to understand the types of passages that occurred and the reasons for them. This discussion will be followed by an in-depth examination of the factors involved in the act of job leaving.

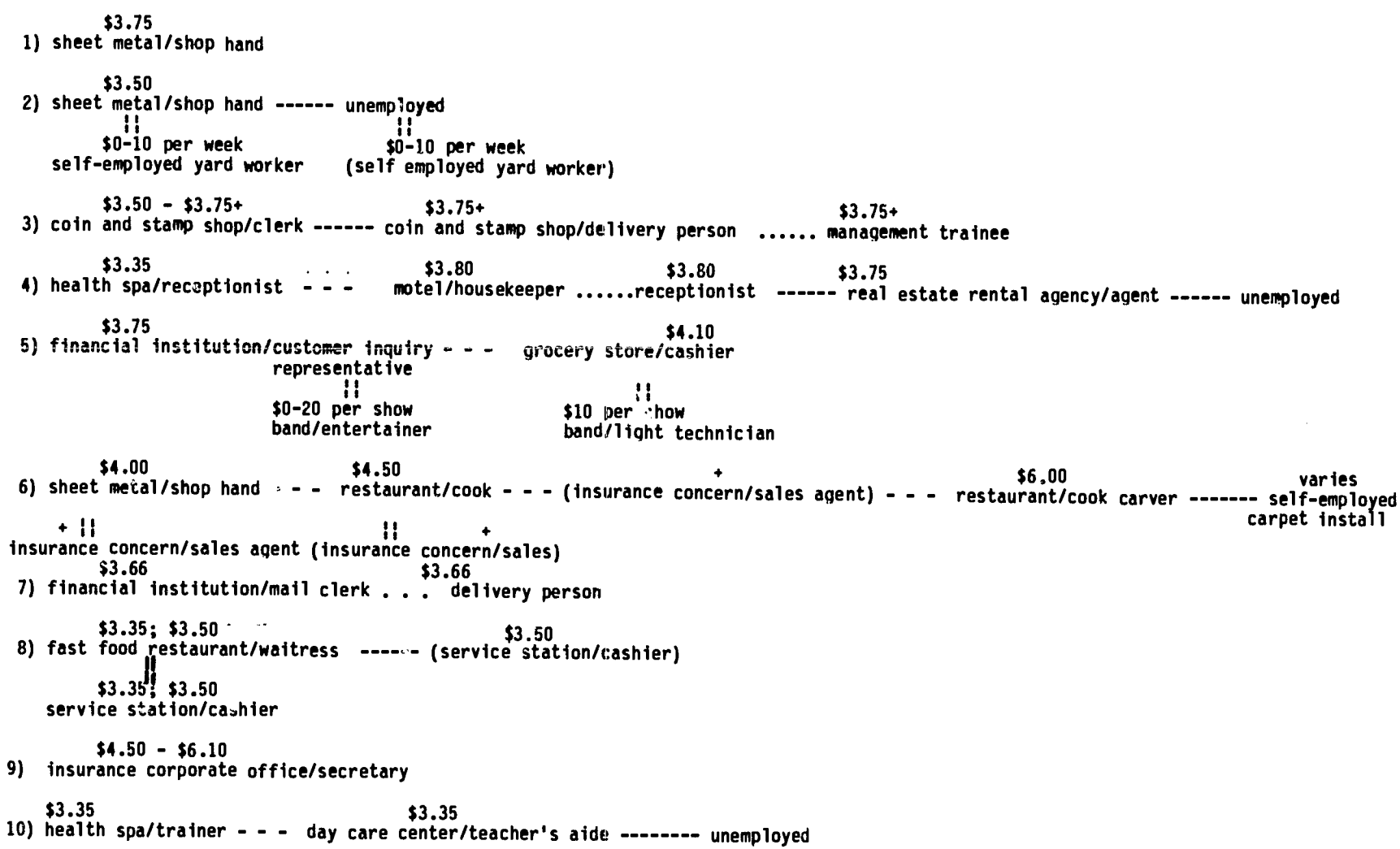
Quits and Firings

Among the 25 youth in this study, there were twice as many incidents of quits (18) as firings (9). Not all youth changed jobs, however. Seven of the 25 five youth held 1 job during the better part of a year and 4 youth experienced status promotions in their jobs. In general, most adolescent workers had fairly steady employment; only a few experienced multiple quits or firings. For instance, during the full course of a year, one 18-year-old high school graduate quit 3 jobs and was fired from yet another. This young man aspired to retire by the age of 35 and energetically pursued a variety of jobs offering opportunities for training and advancement. Another recent high school graduate experienced two firings, one quit, and one promotion in the course of a year. In contrast to the ambitious young man, this young woman moved from one low-paying job to pursue another. She was perceived by two of her employers as being uncommitted and by another employer as being careless. She, in contrast, attributed her difficulties in maintaining employment to difficulties in obtaining transportation and in hours. These and other issues revealing disparate views between young workers and their employers will be analyzed further after the descriptions of the job passages are reviewed.

Since participants were not associated with this project for equivalent periods of time, a detailed comparison of job passages would be misleading. Instead, the best way to document job passages is through illustrating the changes that occurred for each of the individual cases.

In case number one, a young worker was employed as a shop hand in a sheet metal shop for a wage of $3.75 per hour during the study period. Case number two is more complicated as it involves a job passage and multiple jobs. Although this youth was employed as a shop hand in a sheet metal shop at $3.50 per hour, he also was a self employed yard worker earning up to $10 a week. He was fired from the sheet metal shop but continued his work as a self-employed yard worker. He did not become reemployed during the study period. Case

Figure 2. Job Passages by Industry, Job, Wages*, and Type of Change**



181

3.50
11) appliance repairshop/repairman ------- unemployed [withdrew from study]

$3.35
12) cafeteria/server [withdrew from study]

$3.35 $3.65
13) health spa/receptionist . . . trainer - - - (department store/retail clerk) ------ unemployed
$3.65
department store/retail clerk

$3.50 - $4.75
14) appliance repair shop/repariman

$225 for 2 weeks $20.00/show $3.35
15) health spa/trainer - - - Ballet/entertainer (seasonal) unemployed - - - nursing home/program aide - - - army/enlisted man

$3.35 Missing
16) financial institution/bookkeeper - - - toy factory/assembly line worker

$3.35+ $3.35 $3000 per summer missing
17) health spa/exercise trainer - - - fast food restaurant/waitress amusement park entertainer (seasonal) cruiseship/entertainer

$105 per week $85 per week
18) restaurant/waiter - - - pizza shop/delivery person

$3.35 missing
19) health spa/trainer - - - cruise ship entertainer/dancer

$3.35
20) financial institution/proof machine operator

182

21) $3.35 fast foods/cashier - - - missing factory/assembly line worker

22) 3.35 fast foods/cashier - - - missing summer stock/dance

23) $8.40 fastener factory/materials handler

24) $3.35 skating rink/general maintenance, cloak room clerk

self-employed laborer

25) $3.35 retail dairy store/cashier - - - unemployed

*Wages are stated as an hourly rate unless otherwise specified. The symbol "+" indicates a commission.

*The type of connective link between jobs corresponds to the type of change experienced by the individuals. The key is as follows: ------ firing; - - - - quit; ..... promotion. When a person holds more than one job at a time, parallel lines "||" are used to link these jobs. One of the jobs may reappear again embedded in parentheses if a person leaves one of the coterminous jobs.

number 13 is even more complex. This person was first employed as a receptionist in a health spa at a wage rate of $3.35 per hour. She was promoted to the position of exercise trainer at the spa with no change in her wage. While working as a trainer, she began a second job as a retail clerk in a department store for $3.65 per hour. She eventually quit her position as a trainer to work only in the department store. But she lost this job and was unemployed for the duration of the study period.

These illustrations as well as the remaining cases reveal some elaborate employment patterns. Many youth experienced multiple firings and/or quits during the course of 1 year. Job changes were associated with increased wages or increased status. Some job changes were movements from one industry and type of job to a completely different sector and job. Some youth commanded higher salaries than others--even when they were holding comparable jobs. Some youth were reemployed by an employer whom they left through a firing or quit. In other words, the career development patterns of these youth suggest no strong or readily evident patterns. To better understand these job passages, we will examine the similarities and differences that have been observed.

Remaining Versus Leaving

Eight of the youth remained with the same employer during their participation in this study. This stability is worth considering further. These youth were employed in the following capacities:

- Case #1--shop hand in a sheet metal shop at $3.75 per hour
- Case #2 mail clerk, then delivery person in a financial institution at $3.66 per hour
- Case #3--secretary in an insurance corporate headquarters at $4.50-$6.10 per hour
- Case #4--server in a cafeteria at $3.35 per hour (withdrew from the study)
- Case #5--repairman in an appliance shop at $3.50-$4.75 per hour
- Case #6--proof machine operator in a financial institution at $3.35 per hour

- Case #7--materials handler in a stapler factory at $8.40 per hour
- Case #8 general maintenance and cloak room attendant in a skating rink at $3.35 per hour

This inventory of jobs and employers includes industries and firms where job advancement and permanence opportunities are possible, for instance, financial institutions. Although six youth were employed at one point in time in fast food resturants or in health spas, none remained in these jobs for long. Addition-ally, the fast food restaurant or health spa jobs were not sought once these jobs were left. In each instance, youth changed industries following these types of employment.

Not only do most of the jobs held by the eight stable workers provide opportunity structures, but the wages for youth in these jobs are above the minimum with two exceptions. The exceptions are the general maintenance and cloak room position in the skating rink and the proof machine operator's job, both which paid the minimum wage of $3.35 per hour. The value of wages as an incentive to remain with a particular employer is not clear from these cases, however. Youth left jobs even if they might be earning more than the minimum wage. One example is the customer inquiry representative in the financial institution who earned $3.75 per hour and who quit her job to take a position as a cashier in a supermarket to earn $4.10 per hour. Of course, this shift yielded an increase in wages. In fact, throughout all the cases, youth never willingly moved from one job to another paying less. When downward economic mobility occurred, it was related to firings, not quits. For example, the motel receptionist earned $3.80 per hour, but after being fired earned $3.75 per hour in her position as an agent for a real estate rental agency.

Some youth left employers with whom others remained. Several youth in the study initially were employed by the same employer: three shop hands in a sheet metal shop, four employees of one health spa, two employees of a financial institution, and two employees in a fast food chain. No workplace experienced perfect retention; only one out of three employees in the sheet metal shop remained--one left through a firing and one quit his job; no one remained in either health spa; only two youth remained with financial institutions--one in each of the institutions; only one repairman remained in the appliance shop

--the other one was fired; and neither fast-food employee stayed in this business. These disparate routes suggest that a consideration must be made of the particular mix of individual traits and institutional characteristics in each case in order to understand job passages. We cannot assume uniform expectations or performance on the part of individuals across the board. Nor can we assume that youth are treated comparably in the same place of employment. What we can assume is that these passages are related to complex issues and are not simply linked to wages, opportunity structure, or individual motivation and skills.

The previous discussion of job stability and job leaving alerts us to one distinction between remaining in or departing from the workplace. Employers are more likely to retain young workers if they offer long-term prospects and better than minimum wage than if they do not. However, we are still left with more questions than answers with respect to understanding why some workers leave and others remain, given comparable working conditions. Next we turn to an examination of the reasons for job passages. Several cases are reviewed to this end.

Reasons for Job Passages

The difference between quitting a job or being fired from a job is not always easy to assess. Job passages among high-level managers illustrate this ambiguity. A board of directors that is disgruntled with the leadership of a chief executive officer does not generally fire this officer. Instead, the board provides the clear message that a resignation is expected. A certain level of face-saving gestures is available to the job incumbent at upper levels of employment (Pfeffer 1981).

Among young workers, the ambiguity surrounding quitting and being fired does not revolve around face-saving concerns. Rather, differing perceptions between employers and youth about the latter is compliant with workplace demands making it difficult to determine whether the young workers have quit their jobs or have actually been fired. Youth in our study frequently behaved as if workplace conditions were highly flexible. By coming late to work, taking off from work, or not accepting the schedules set by their managers, some youth overstepped the boundaries of what their employers would accept. The experience of Cindy, a black female employed as a salad bar tender and

hostess in a fast food restaurant, demonstrates the conflict between youth expectations and employer expectations for job performance.

Cindy began working as a salad bar tender in a fast food restaurant a few weeks after moving back to Columbus to live with her mother. She obtained her job by systematically inquiring at each of a number of fast food restaurants located along a main drag in north Columbus. Only 1 year out of high school, Cindy had married, spent part of the year following her graduation in Houston, Texas, and subsequently had left her husband in New Orleans, Louisiana, before returning to the midwest. Since the age of 16, Cindy had held many jobs. In order of their occurrence, her previous jobs were clerking in a shoe store for an 8-month period, preparing hamburgers in a fast food restaurant for a 6-month period, handling the cash register in a department store for the Christmas holiday season, and clerking in a women's clothing store for a 5-month period. For several months during the course of the study she simultaneously held two jobs--hostessing and tending the salad bar in the fast food restaurant and operating the cash register in a self-service gas station.

Cindy's two jobs were comparable in two important ways: wages paid to new employees started at $3.35 per hour and both were part-time jobs with variable schedules. During a work history interview, Cindy complained about her limited hours and unpredictable schedules in both workplaces. She showed no specific preference for one type of work over another. Her descriptions of all the jobs she currently or had previously held were colorless and abstract. When asked whether she liked her job in the clothing store, she responded, "It was OK." When asked what she liked best about clerking, she replied, "It was a job." Similar questioning about her service station job evoked a comparable answer, "What do I like? I don't know; it's not like I like or dislike it, you know, it's just a way of making money."

Despite the lack of a career orientation to work, Cindy clearly stated that she was eager to work. She was never pleased with her number of hours, nor was she happy with the small income each job provided. Income was important to her in achieving independence, which she defined as being able to purchase an automobile and to afford her own apartment.

Observations of Cindy's work in the restaurant show that she approached her work with a grim and relentless focus upon her job responsibilities. The

following two excerpts are taken from field notes made by an observer in the restaurant dining area at both 4:30 and 6:30 of the same shift. In each case Cindy's "runs" lasted less than 5 minutes and were preceded and followed by similar, physically demanding work episodes.

> 4:30: Cindy walks to southern center station that holds pitchers of soft drinks. Cindy fills two tall plastic glasses and carries them to a western table. Patrols southern tables. Picks up an order slip and walks over to food service center. Returns and walks briskly down east wall over to salad bar, looking at tables as she walks. Stops at salad bar and brushes food crumbs off with one hand into the other hand. Leaves to walk up western center aisle, looking around as she does so. Goes into the kitchen. Returns with large tub of lettuce, brown crocks of mushrooms, broccoli buds, and two other crocks. She replaces these one by one, straightens the metal tongs that stand up in the salad containers. Returns tub to the kitchen. Reenters dining area. Walks down western center. A seated man hails her, She goes off to the central station and returns to his table.
>
> 6:30: Cindy patrols the eastern wall down to the far south up the eastern aisle. Stops at central service area. Carries tub of lettuce. Replenishes salad bar with lettuce. Returns to kitchen with depleted lettuce tub. Back down eastern wall to far south. Over to central area, past it to north east. Picks up empty plates and brings these to tub on northern counter. Returns to center, walks slowly out from salad bar area, looking around. There is still a continous stream of diners entering the restaurant--as well as leaving the restaurant.

Following her observation of this workshift, the observer reflected on the nature of Cindy's work tasks in the restaurant:

> Cindy does one task at a time, which generally means a lot of walking. If a visit to a table produces a task, such as picking up a tray, she will do that task and then return to the site. Often she simply patrols the aisles--searching for something to do. The salad bar service area in the center of the restaurant is the nexus for her travels. Yet, she rarely rests there; she is always moving and carrying on with her search for tasks.

The rigorous pace of Cindy's work also typified the performance of her co-workers, all of whom were subject to the same scheduling vagaries, periodic evaluations, and low wages. Three young, black, female co-workers and Cindy were conversing with each other in a corner booth prior to beginning a work shift. The observer joined these employees and asked, "Are you on the clock?" One young woman responded, "Are you kidding? They wouldn't let us just sit

here if we were on the clock; we'd be out there running ragged." Cindy's managers, two white male assistants and one white female general manager, agreed that Cindy worked hard. Yet, she received only average scores; that is, in her 3-month assessment, she was evaluated as merely "meeting expectations" on each of the 5 performance categories: customer awareness, station ability, personal appearance, attendance, and "teamwork. Cindy had already begun her part-time job at the service station at the time of this evaluation. Some of the raters' comments reflected not only their concern about her capa-city to keep working at a fast pace in the restaurant now that she had taken on other employment, but also their concern about schedule conflicts between the two jobs. Ultimately, these schedule conflicts forced Cindy to prioritize the competing jobs.

Throughout her employment history, Cindy's jobs were part-time, unpredictable in schedule, and low paying, typical of work generally available to youth in the service sector of the economy. Following 3 months on the job in the restaurant, Cindy's salary was raised 10 cents above minimum wage, but she was still restricted to variable hours, usually between 10-20 hours per week. In but a 2-month time period at the service station, Cindy was given a 15 cent raise above the minimum wage and was frequently asked to work up to 40 hours per week. However, both of her employers treated scheduling as a weekly event that resulted in frequent conflicts.

Scheduling conflicts peaked in November when a new manager in the service station changed the routine from a weekly event to a daily posting of employee hours. Cindy missed 3 days of work in the restaurant in 1 week due to these scheduling problems. As the assistant manager in the restaurant saw it: "The idiot (the service station manager) at her other job kept changing her hours; either she had to stay longer or come in when she was not scheduled to work. I went without her for 3 days last week. I only schedule her (according to) what I need; I don't schedule any extra, so I couldn't keep having this happen." The team of restaurant managers responded by calling Cindy in for a conference. The outcome of this meeting was that Cindy lost her position at the restaurant. The assistant manager discussed this meeting: "We had a little conference, get-together type of thing, and then we decided it would be best for both parties if she were to leave and concentrate more fully on the other job. . . . She did have to decide which she wanted and due to the fact

that she was getting more hours at the other job, she decided to go ahead and take the other job." Cindy did not see this meeting in the same light as did the assistant manager. In her words: "She (the general manager) couldn't understand that my other job was a priority . . . . I lived at my other job." She added the service station had to take priority because it provided better pay and more hours.

Cindy would have preferred to continue working both part-time jobs, but her scheduling conflicts prohibited this course of events. Cindy was forced to decide between her two jobs. Although both presented similar, unpleasant demands, one provided more income. Since income was the primary incentive for her participation in the labor force, Cindy, not surprisingly, in a sense co-operated in her own dismissal from the restaurant. The restaurant manager was correct in viewing this situation as a mutual agreement to the extent that Cindy regularly gave priority to the scheduling demands of the service station. Yet, given Cindy's willingness to continue working both jobs, this job passage was seen by Cindy as a termination.

Cindy's job passage was perhaps the most complex of the cases recorded during the study because of the great number of push-and-pull factors contributing to her leaving the restaurant. However, none of the remaining incidents presents a clear-cut or straightforward picture. Others' passages, in contrast, are clearly linked to workplace characteristics. Some of the other cases will be briefly reviewed.

Charles

Charles is a white, male graduate from a vocational sheet metal program. Charles' part-time work placement while in high school led to a full-time job offer in a sheet metal shop following his graduation. This employment lasted only 30 days. Charles was fired for missing work three times, providing sketchy reasons for absences, and making mistakes on the job. Charles did not readily find alternative employment. He spent most of the summer doing yard work in his neighborhood and applying for jobs in restaurants, service stations, and factories. A knee injury, which he claims to have suffered in the sheet metal shop, restricted his job search activities and the type of work he thought he could handle.

Rod

Rod is a white male who served time in the county jail during what would have been his senior year of high school. He had two juvenile convictions for charges of breaking and entering. While in jail, Rod became acquainted with Justin, the owner-manager of a coin and stamp retail business. On one of this businessman's regular visits with another inmate, Justin told Rod to look him up after serving his sentence. For many complex reasons, including his humanitarian tendencies as well as the personal satisfaction he apparently received from "rehabilitating" well intentioned but "wayward" youth, Justin invited Rod to enter into an apprentice-type relationship in the coin and stamp store. This relationship included both skill training and personal counseling components. After 6 months of employment, Justin discovered that Rod had stolen merchandise from him on at least 2 occasions. Justin subsequently fired Rod. Yet, the counseling sessions and friendship between the two persisted. In fact, Justin facilitated Rod's subsequent job search by identifying jobs and lending him a car to search for work. After 2 months had passed with Rod still unemployed, Justin rearranged his business operation in a way that provided a key position for Rod as a management trainee. Justin maintained that Rod's aptitude for learning, as well as his potential for becoming a loyal and dedicated assistant, were the major considerations in this latter employment decision.

Karen

Karen, a white female, did not remain long on jobs after she graduated from high school. Managers in the health spa, where she was employed as a receptionist, and the real estate rental agency, where she showed model units, fired her for excessive absences. She was fired from the motel primarily because of her carelessness in accepting an invalid charge card. Although Karen moved from job to job, she was steady in her pursuit of work. After being fired, she became reemployed within only a few weeks.

Karen seemed indifferent about losing her jobs in the health spa and rental agency. Her excessive absences were a reflection of this indifference. In contrast, she cried in the manager's office of the motel when she was fired from this position. The manager reported that Karen had shown interest in

developing a career. Unfortunately, the motel manager felt that although Karen had ability, she approached her work too carelessly for him to keep her as an employee.

Kelvin

Kelvin, a white male, is involved in three job passages between two places of employment--a restaurant and a sheet metal shop. The circumstances involved in these job changes are discussed in detail later in this chapter. Kelvin was a hard worker and was well respected by his employers. He was driven to make money, a drive that led him as a scholastic honors student to the world of work instead of the college classroom following his high school graduation. Kelvin quit two of the jobs in these passage incidents--as a cook in a restaurant and as a shop hand in a sheet metal factory--for better wages. He returned to the cook position after successfully bargaining for a higher wage. The restaurant managers fired him in December when he requested time off from work to visit his father. Kelvin was denied the request but left anyway and was fired. This termination did not discourage Kelvin because he had already made arrangements to form a partnership in a carpet installation business with a former co-worker in the restaurant.

Laurie

Laurie was involved in two job passages. This white female was an enthusiast of the theatre and body building. Laurie held jobs in health spas during high school and found employment as an instructor following her graduation. She quit this job in November after finding a position in a new area of employment for her--a teacher's aide in a day-care center. Laurie had actively been seeking alternative employment while holding her instructor job in order to escape the exhausting 12-hour shifts in the spa. She also disliked her ancillary duties, such as directing traffic and cleaning restrooms. Finally, she was offended by a line of questioning from the spa manager regarding missing money.

The day-care center job did not turn out well for Laurie, however. After only a few weeks in this position, the center director dismissed her. Laurie was unable to gain control over the class of preschool-aged children, accord-

ing to the director. Laurie was stunned by her dismissal. She had been finding it difficult to establish order among her preschool class, but did not expect this early dismissal. Still, Laurie remained adamant about not returning to a job in a health spa, the work with which she was most familiar. She dedicated herself instead to obtaining a position in an office or one related to the theatre or broadcasting.

Dick

Dick, a white urban Appalachian male, was fired from his job as a shop hand in an appliance repair shop. The shop manager reported that Dick was fired for having a bad attitude and a lack of priorities. Although Dick was observed to be a steady worker, it was also clear that he did not fit in well with the other men in the shop, many of whom were related to each other. For instance, Dick did not participate in the racist conversations that frequently took place among his co-workers. Dick moved following his dismissal, leaving no forwarding address.

Betty

Betty, a young white female with musical and theatrical talents, held two jobs. By day, Betty was a customer inquiry representative in a financial institution. By night, Betty played bass and sang in the New Wave band. It was taxing on Betty to hold both jobs, especially since she earned little money from her band job. Better money and better prospects for the future were available to Betty as a lighting technician in her boyfriend's rock band. This band was preparing a videotape portfolio in order to make a move to California. Betty quit her position as a musician in order to become affiliated with the rock band.

Ben

Ben, a white male, worked behind the counter of a fast food restaurant, flipping hamburgers. Ben commented during that summer that he did not see the position in a long-term way, but that his career interests had not yet become focused. Ben's father took a strong interest in his son's work life. Through his father's connections, Ben was offered a position as a laborer in a factory, thus ending his employment in the "burger economy."

Explaining Job Passages

When managers and workers were asked to make separate accounts of a particular employee's job passage, they quite readily provided rationales that appeared to justify their actions in the context of the job-leaving incident in question. Employers tended to attribute their actions in firing workers to worker traits and behaviors, while workers, though they might admit to a personal failing, were more apt to cite workplace conditions as the root cause.

Features of the job setting most frequently mentioned by youth who left their jobs included lack of adequate pay, and harsh and rigid standards for the performance of demeaning, physically demanding tasks. In nearly all cases, those who quit their jobs left only after they had located other, higher-paying, work affording more opportunity for advancement. For example, Kelvin, who quit his jobs twice during the course of the year, left a position as a sheet metal shop worker for a position as a cook in a restaurant offering a complex selection of dinner items. The preparation of these items involved considerable kitchen work demanded a variety of cooking skills. In the sheet metal shop, Kelvin's salary of $4 per hour was only $2.50 less per hour than the wage earned by his foreman who had worked at the shop for 15 years.

Not only did the work at the restuarant allow Kelvin to move from sauteeing foods to more advanced skills in broiling and carving, but potential earnings as a master cook ranged as high as $9 per hour. Kelvin's starting salary of $6 per hour at the restaurant was only 50 cents less per hour than the wages paid to his sheet metal shop supervisor.

Laurie who quit her job as a health spa instructor for employment in a preschool day-care center, was concerned with the imposition of tasks she considered to be demeaning in addition to the relatively low wages paid by the spa. Her supervisor acknowledged that the jobs of instructor and receptionist, uniformily staffed by youths aged 18-22, provided few material rewards or opportunities for advancement.

The spa manager, Mickey, recognized that a relatively high level of interpersonal skill demands characterized the jobs of receptionist and instructor for which individuals holding these jobs received inadequate pay at $3.35 per hour. Not only were these employees required to interact extensively with the

public, supplying countless bits of information to incoming members and guests concerning the facilities, hours, activities, and the like, but instructors were also expected to supplement their income by recruiting and enlisting new members for which they received a small commission. Although he acknowledged the complexity of skill demands characterizing these jobs, Mickey held low performance expectations because of the low wages paid to job incumbents. Referring to the pressure from corporate management for improved performance in the receptionist role, Mickey complained: "They tell me that they don't like the way my receptionist answers the phone, or they don't like the way my receptionist keeps them on hold for any length of time, or that my receptionist is an idiot. That's when I express the fact that 'that idiot' only gets paid $3.50 an hour and for $3.50 an hour I'd be an idiot too."

Mickey held similar views of the structural constraints affecting the instructor's position: "The only way that. . .(an instructor) could make a career of the job is if he went into the sales end of it where he could be two things--he would be selling members and helping people on the exercise floor. Our floor instructors are hired on what we expect to be a temporary basis, usually students, or it's a part-time job where they're filling in, so it's not a full-time position for any length of time." The position is identified as a part-time and temporary one with few avenues for promotion, factors that also characterize operations in the fast food industry, the primary sector for youth employment.

Gary, a manager in a fast-food restaurant employing two youths in our study, referred to the rapid turnover among young workers in his business as the "6-months factor:" "Well, we figure for our time investment, training, things along this line, if they stay 6 months we are basically breaking even. Ideally, we would like them to stay as long as possible, but we do look at the six-month factor, at least I do." Although not all eating establishments view their businesses in this manner, in the settings where youth are most frequently employed, wages, scheduling, and work-task structures conspire to compel most youth to view their work in the same manner as their employers do--as unrewarding and temporary. Not surprisingly, many youths get the message fairly early in their employment and move on.

CONCLUSIONS

Factors contributing to the job passages occurring among the young workers in the study are complex and varied. The points of view of both the employers and the young workers were often at odds with respect to performance expectations, commitment to the work organization, and longrange prospects. These conflicting perspectives indicate that less than a complete socialization has occurred to align new employees with the norms of their workplaces. However, variance in expectations between employers and adolescent workers also occurred in situations which did not result in job passages. In some cases, employers took greater care in orienting their new employees, but in other cases, these conflicting perspectives simply did not become problematic.

Job changes among young adults can be understood by paying specific attention to the experiences of youth inside workplaces. Past research focused primarily on wages, motivation, and employers' attitudes without considering the ways that young people are initiated into workplaces. This neglects a very important issue. After examining a central act in career development, that of leaving jobs, we can conclude that considerable confusion surrounds job passages involving young workers. Misperceptions from the point of view of the employers on the one hand and young workers on the other, impede young people's legitimate acceptance in the work force. Just as is the case with other organized activities, more deliberate procedural attempts on the part of employers to create opportunities for young people would likely alter the current prevailing image of youth as unstable and unmotivated employees.

REFERENCES

Blau, Francine D., and Kahn, Lawrence M. "Race and Sex Differences in Quits By Young Workers." In Industrial and Labor Relations Review 34(1981): 563-577.

Borus, Michael E. "Willingness to Work among Youth." In Journal of Human Resources 17(1981): 581-593.

Feldstein, Martin and Ellwood, David T. "Teenage Unemployment: What Is the Problem?" In Youth Labor Market Problem: Its Nature, Causes, and Consequences, edited by Richard B. Freeman and David A. Wise. Chicago: The University Press, 1982.

Hollenbeck, Kevin, and Smith, Brian. Selecting Young Workers: The Influence of Applicants' Education and Skills on Employability Assessments by Employers. Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1984.

Hovarth, Francis W. "Job Tenure of Workers in January 1981." Monthly Labor Review 105(1982):34-36.

Kalleberg, Arne L., and Loscocco, Karyn A. "Age Differences in Job Satisfaction." American Sociological Review 48(1983):78-90.

Maizels, Joan. Adolescent Needs and the Transition from School to Work. University of London: The Athlone Press, 1970.

Miguel, Richard J. and Folk, Robert C. Youth Perceptions of Employer Standards: Effects of Employer Outcomes and Employer Evaluations. Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1984.

Murphy, Carol and Jenks, Lynn. "Getting A Job--What Skills are Needed?" In Research Brief. San Franciso: Far West Laboratory, November 1982.

Osterman, Paul. Getting Started: The Youth Labor Market. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1980.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey. Power in Organizations. Marshfield, MA: Pitman 1981.

Shapiro, David. "Working Youth." In Tomorrow's Workers, edited by Michael E. Borus. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1983.

Sorrentino, Constance. "Youth Unemployment: An International Perspective." Monthly Labor Review 104 (1981): 3-15.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS
by

Kathryn M. Borman

Several problems were addressed by the research reported this study. First, a major social issue concerns the difficulty faced by youth in general in entering the world of work. Currently, unemployed adolescents constitute the largest age group out of work. Not only do youth as a whole face an often hostile job market, but also young women and minority youth face special difficulties. Teenage girls typically receive fewer opportunities to explore and plan their future careers while in school. Moreover, girls enrolled in vocational education programs in high school are generally trained in home economics, business education, and health, constituting a narrow range of generally low-paying occupational choices. In contrast, boys receive training in agribusiness, technical fields, and skilled industrial trades that provide higher-paying work in a wider range of job choices.

Minority youth, particularly blacks and urban Appalachian youth from low-income and poor families, often avoid more challenging job opportunities located outside their neighborhoods. Such jobs disrupt ongoing networks of exchange among kin and peers. Also, minorities often perceive the world of work as controlled by individuals who exploit their labor but do not provide opportunities for advancement (Ogbu, forthcoming). This study has provided a framework for understanding the differential training and learning of youth from varied backgrounds who are at work in comparable and contrasting work settings.

We believe that policy should be directed to easing the transition from school to work for adolescent job seekers. As has seen, youth are grossly unprepared to find jobs in their chosen fields. Adolescents seem to benefit from supportive mentoring supplied by former teachers and program administrators but are still generally uninformed about how to locate work.

A second major problem involves the linkages between educational experiences in school and training and learning in work settings. By specifying the nature of employer/employee training interactions and by documenting the nature

of these interactions from time of hiring to termination, transfer, or movement from the initial work setting over a 12-month period, we have made detailed, descriptive accounts of such phenomena as the process of fitting into the job, negotiating authority, and receiving training. These data can provide educators and trainers with detailed information about the nature of youth training and learning in technologically varied work roles. This information should be used to modify existing curricula and promote collaboration between schools and work settings in service of the training and learning of youth.

Third, the data gathered in these descriptive case studies help to clarify theoretical and practical issues in the school effectiveness and organizational effectiveness literatures. The case study method has been advocated as a proper vehicle for specifying the nature of learning and failure to learn in school settings (Borman 1981). Likewise, Yin (1981) and others have argued that the case study approach illuminates "special languages, unique and peculiar problems, and, more generally, distinct patterns of thought and action" in organizational life (Van Maanen 1981). A case study approach does not specify a particular methodology; rather, "the distinguishing characteristic of the case study" as a research strategy is that it "attempts to examine (a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 1981). The case study approach in the context of the present research allowed the researchers to enter into the world of adolescents who are newly embarked upon careers in technologically diverse fields. The research uncovers the specific nature of workplace training and learning and the relationship of training and learning to task structures and organizational structures in a range of technologically diverse settings.

The case studies of youth in work settings reported here provide an anthology of the meaning of work for adolescents employed in technologically diverse work settings. Specifically, our conclusions touch upon six interrelated topics: finding a job, attributions in the workplace, fitting into a job, authority relations in adolescent workplaces, training in adolescent work sites, and quits and firings among adolescent workers.

Finding a Job

Finding work is a difficult process for most young workers seeking to join the labor force. Youth are beset by both structural problems inherent in the dismal picture of youth unemployment that confronts them and the personal dilemmas that inevitably arise for all young people during this period in the life cycle.

What seems most striking to the adult observer about adolescent job seekers is the mixture of naivete and cynicism that characterizes their attitude toward finding a job. On the one hand, young workers believe that self-presentation and good luck are critical to finding and getting a job. They often believe they can maintain their current relationships, stay in their hometowns, locate just the right job, and perhaps even attend college, all at the same time, in the face of unemployment and frustrating job searches. On the other hand, they suspect, probably correctly, that particular career avenues are sexist or biased in other ways and that counseling and other support services are poorly equipped to provide advice about particular jobs that might interest them.

Health and emotional problems may become a shield against the reality of being out of a job for several months. Young people may overlook the handicap their problems and dilemmas present to employers. Employers of adolescent workers are likely to be interested primarily in male teenage workers because of their physical strength, agility, ability to tolerate long hours, and the like. One fast food manager in the study remarked, "That's the main reason we hire them (e.g., teenage workers), they're strong, can move fast, and don't tire out too easily during a rough shift." Employers of female adolescent workers appear to be interested in their abilities to endure isolated, menial, and boring work.

Finding a job appears easiest for workers of both sexes if they are well connected into jobs through friends and relatives who provide them with key contacts in job settings. However, contacts by themselves are not sufficient to ensure employment. Perhaps the best model to describe job search activity links both economic and sociological factors:

> In the economic model, both prospective job holder and employer search. Each uses a rational calculus to determine whether to

search one more time period or whether to stop searching and accept the current job (hire the best person who now is available) or drop out of the labor force (not fill the position). The important assumption of the economist is that information must be generated by conscious actions on the part of the searchers. For the sociologist, however, job search information may be a product of race, sex, or position within a firm. By selecting certain jobs, information on other jobs may be readily available as a kind of fringe benefit. "The job searcher may be unlikely to know this in advance, or other factors of the job may far override this aspect. Nevertheless, if the time comes when a new job must be obtained, some people who happen to have gotten information-rich jobs will find the process all that much easier than others. In this sense, discrimination against blacks and women could occur due to their bad positioning in the "information network." Furthermore, this positioning comes about more from sociological processes than from conscious, rational strategy. From the job occupant's point of view, this positioning may seem to be purely "luck" (Hills, 16 November 1984).

Attributions in the Workplace

At present, very little research focuses on the nature and importance of attributions in the work setting. However, the process of attribution and the factors that affect it have far-reaching consequences for the young worker. Additional research is needed to identify all of the forces that contribute to the formation of causal inferences in the marketplace.

A better understanding of contextual variables and their impact on worker behavior may alter the assessment and evaluation of candidates for employment by shifting the emphasis from stable, dispositional characteristics to situation-specific behaviors. Such modifications have ramifications for the employer, the job seeker, and the worker who is under consideration for promotion. In all these cases, the impact of the work environment is equally as important as the internal dispositions of the individuals involved.

Employers may discover that the employment practices and the work environments, not the workers, are problematic. Where stereotypical expectations and cross-cultural misunderstandings contribute to discrimination, multicultural awareness and human relations strategies can affect equality of opportunity. Multicultural awareness in the training and assessment of young workers is one essential means of easing the school-to-work transition for many. To encourage teachers to grapple with the demands of education in a pluralistic society seems a futile enterprise when their students graduate into a workplace that is

overwhelmingly dominated by the values and expectations of the white, male, middle-class work ethic.

The application of attribution theory to the social organization of the work setting is one of many opportunities for educators to have an impact on the industrial setting. It provides one means of creating a two-way flow of information between education and industry, instead of the current, one-way trend from industry to the schools.

Most important, the application of attribution theory has benefits for the individual worker. So much of our current knowledge is rooted in the perceptions of employers and experienced workers that we rarely see the work site throught the eyes of the newly employed youth. There is a need, as Van Maanen (1977) argues, for the kind of qualitative data that enable us to see the "social reality" of the work world as the young worker sees it. Attribution theory provides a framework through which the new worker can gain self-understanding as well as insight into the actions and reactions of employers and co-workers. By understanding the perceptions of others and the factors that affect those perceptions, young workers increase their probability of success in the work setting. Given the tendency for the attributions of significant others to become self-fulfilling prophecies for the young person (Bar-Tal 1979; Harvey and Weary 1981), such knowledge can prevent youth from blaming themselves for failures that have little or no relationship to real performance or their future potential in alternative work settings. This realization is especially critical in light of evidence that "cognitive systems pertinent to achievement motivation may be learned differentially by various racial and social class groupings" (Bar-Tal 1979). Although it is not yet conclusive, the research suggests that in educational settings both blacks and females may perform below their abilities because of attributional patterns that differ from those of most white males. Further research is necessary to determine whether or not this is true of job training situations as well. If so, change is necessary to equalize the opportunities for populations which are traditionally excluded from upper-level management positions. For too long these groups have been "waiting in the wings." Now that they have gained access to the stage, it is time that they have the opportunity for the "better parts" as well.

Fitting into a Job

Cultural transmission in the work setting is an active, negotiated process that seems to be most smoothly accomplished when the novice is easily assimilated into a work crew whose interactions are governed by a code of cooperation and flexibility in accomplishing the task at hand. In other words, the labor process and the pace of work that governs it substantially shape the new workers's accomodation to the work setting.

Management culture is important in this process but only because the way that it is characterized by the new worker appears to play an important role in the "success" or "failure" of the new worker in accomodating to the job. At best, management culture through the role taken by the new worker's supervisors is perceived to be actively supportive. At work, it may be seen as hostile, inflexible, rejecting, and enigmatic.

Certain organizational settings appear to be less likely to provide benign work climates than others. The findings of the Adolescent Worker Study suggest that these are likely to be banks and other large institutions where routine mental labor is carried out by young, entry-level workers, usually females, in accomplishing such tasks as filing, checking monthly statements, and the like. There appears to be a high level of mistrust in these settings. In the cases of clerical workers in the study, relationships became so badly eroded by mistrust that each quit her job. The regulation and control of work tasks by computerized systems in such settings limit and control worker independence and autonomy, rather than expanding the job by increasing task variety and enhancing decision-making opportunities. According to management experts, organizations such as banks and insurance firms are "trying to join the new electronic technologies with the old style of rigidly hierarchical management and tightly circumscribed jobs." As computers are introduced, remaining jobs tend to be redefined to require less training or skill (New York Times, 30 September 1984).

In contrast, some settings, such as the appliance repair shop and the fastener factory, promote the relatively easy integration of most new workers, usually males, into the job. To be sure, some workers are not successful in their accomodation to small business and repair shop settings because their personal values and background experience undermine relationships with co-workers and supervisors from the very beginning of their employment.

Oftentimes new workers are not buffered by having well-established relatives working in the organization. On the whole, small businesses, repair shops, and factory settings provide far more autonomy in carrying out job-related tasks since tasks are less alienated than the mental work done by clerical workers in banks and other offices. Workers in the shop and factory settings are well aware of their locations in the flow of production. In the bank, clerical workers have little control over their jobs. They are subject to the monthly cycle of business and personal account activity. In addition, they are often burdened by the unpredictable and intrusive nature of computers that function to both regulate and control the work.

In both the shop and factory settings, workers are explicitly told to organize their tasks in a manner harmonious with the individual worker's skills and predilections. Interactions between workers and supervisors occur on a daily basis, and co-worker interactions are virtually continous despite the deafening noise from machines and equipment. By contrast, the bank's organizational arrangements create a gap between supervisors and workers and the jobs themselves are inflexibly dependent upon schedules and designs completely out of the worker's control.

So long as employers in their capacity as supervisors remain aloof from new young workers, and especially when their distance is stretched further by technologically innovative machinery, young workers will feel threatened and alienated. There seems to be the sentiment abroad among supervisors that young, part-time workers are highly expendable. Few employers will actually express these sentiments directly. However, policies governing hourly wages, breaktimes and informal conversation on the job, as well as expectations for near-perfect performance, seem most heavily calculated to promote the failure of young, female office workers in particular.

Authority Relations in Adolescent Workplaces

The inescapable nature of authority relations in adolescent workplaces demands that young workers develop some recognition of the rhetoric of rules and practices that operate in these settings. Even in those contexts where managers are unable to enforce their workplace standards, managers attempt to construct an image of the ubiquity of supervision. Managers utilize varied

approaches to supervision: charisma, coercion, and reason. These variations do not seem directly related to differences in work settings, but are contingent upon individual differences in the context of situationally specific interaction. The three superordinates in Roy's mail room, for instance, used quite dissimilar strategies in overseeing their workers. The location of the mailroom in the complex organization of a financial ins-titution would suggest the logic of a rational-legal approach to authority. Yet, the managers were not predisposed to use this approach, developing coercive and charismatic means just as readily. The rational-legal approach was uniformily most effective with the young workers because they had not initially been told the reasons behind the rules they were expected to respect. In another setting, the coin and stamp store, the manager eventually decided to become more coercive with his young employee because he was not obtaining the results he wanted through reason or persuasion.

It is also apparent that authority relations are changeable. Youth adjust to rules and practices either through greater compliance or through greater resistance, both of which hamper spontaneity. Managers, too, make adjustments, but with the intention of increasing cooperation among young employees. There is little evidence of negotiation between young workers and managers that results in relaxed standards or increased flexibility. The numerous instances of termination, which managers attributed to young workers' failure to respect the rules and comply with practices, affirm the strength of managerial authority in workplaces.

Simmel's phrase "societas leonina" aptly describes the unbalanced relationsip between young workers and their bosses. Structural supports, affording managers far greater power, buttress this imbalance. The labor market opportunity structure for young workers is limited--with most jobs available in the secondary market (e.g., health spas, fast food restaurants, and so on) and positioned at the entry level. Additionally, unemployment rates for the young are substantially higher than the rates for older age groups, especially among nonwhite youth. If these structural factors are coupled with a negative social-psychological predisposition on the part of employers to expect an inadequate performance from young workers, the plight of young workers is increased. Since managers are especially wary about their young employ-

ees' respect for authority and since market opportunity structures are limited, young workers have but a narrow margin for resistance or insubordination in workplaces. Given their lack of experience, insubordination is frequently an artifact of their general workplace ignorance.

The enactment and recognition of authority is best understood as a set of voluntary and intentional social actions: young people must purposefully comply to managerial directions in order for authority structures to be upheld and for business as usual to move forward. In view of the purposeful quality of authority relations, it seems that schools should be able to help prepare young people for the authority relations they will face in workplaces. However, this expectation from schools--that they serve as agents in easing the transition from school to work--has its proponents and its adversaries.

The most vocal group of proponents of the view that schools should take an active role in preparing young people for work is the vocational education community. Since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, the vocational curriculum track has been part of American public education. Originally, vocational education supported programs in the occupational areas of trade and industry, agriculture, and home economics to correspond to the work force needs of businesses and industries in the early part of the century. Reforms have been concerned with instruction in career awareness and development, job search skills, and, most recently, vocational ethics. It is this last area, vocational ethics, that relates to authority relations. Curricular material, including both books and computerized modules, instruct students in learning normative rules of working and in gaining a respect for superordinates. Students get high grades when they master the "proper" attitudes toward work as follows: reporting for work on time and when scheduled; following directions; sharing problems with supervisors; being careful with a company's property; and telling the truth.

The 1980s have witnessed a proliferation of partnerships between business and education that further develop ways that schools can prepare young people for work. A typical part of these programs is a concern for introducing students "to the performance and attitudinal requirements of the workplace." Some analysts are concerned about the close relationship between education and business to the extent that students learn the specific interests of business

and industry at the expense of a broader understanding of social, political, and economic processes. Spring, for instance, describes this dilemma as follows:

> Employers might be happy with the schools determining whether or not a person is a compliant worker, but it does not forbode much good for the quality of our future society if this becomes a major goal of socialization within the public schools. A society of people with proper attitudinal requirements for the workplace might be one that has lost its inventive and dynamic qualities.

Additionally, the target student group of many of the recent job development partnerships are central city youth who are predominantly from lower-income groups and are nonwhite. A limited educational emphasis with respect to skill learning in these job development programs may result in improved adaptability to workplaces among program participants, but may also lead to restricted capabilities of movement beyond entry-level employment.

Schools also have informal ways of conveying authority relations to students. As do all complex organizations, school systems design their own internal opportunity structure and sanctions that operate within the system. This opportunity structure is the curricular tracking system. Critics of curriculum tracking point out that an indirect consequence of this system is the construction of a hidden curriculum or paracurriculum of schooling. This paracurriculum places a greater emphasis on obedience to rules and respect for the authority of office among the nonacademic tracks than is the case in academic, college preparatory classes. Since curricular tracks may correspond closely to the socioeconomic status of students, in effect, obedience may be emphasized among students from lower economic classes who will be assuming a subordinate role with limited "career" options in workplaces at an earlier point in their lives than their college-bound schoolmates in the upper academic tracks.

Whether one examines the workplace-related formal curriculum or similar informal curricular programs in schools, there are some notable differences in people's experiences associated with socioeconomic variables. Certainly, schools alone cannot be expected to remedy inequality in society, but neither are they expected to perpetuate or intensify inquality. How, then, can schools help students become better equipped for dealing with authority relations in

workplaces without simultaneously teaching students to be docile, compliant, and unquestioning?

One constructive suggestion has been recently proposed by Ronald Corwin (forthcoming). It is Corwin's thesis that work-skill levels in workplaces may have become technically downgraded in some jobs, but that organizational skills have become increasingly difficult to master. By organizational skills Corwin means such abilities as understanding how organizations work, how authority is implemented, and how and why rules are administered. A sufficient body of generalized knowledge about organizational structures and processes has been developed and can be incorporated into the curriculum of secondary schools. Ironically, this body of knowledge is a standard part of the specialized training of managers. The exposure of students to a body of systematic knowledge about organizations would provide a basis for their better-informed participation in authority relations in workplaces.

The young clerk in the coin and stamp shop commented that high school had been a "game" to him but that his workplace was "a lot different." Once this new entrant to the labor force becomes more familiar with the actors at work, the rules--both formal and informal, how divisions relate to the organization as a whole, and how decisions are made--he may change his view. Meanwhile, this young worker must on his own attempt to determine how to please his boss while he maintains his personal integrity.

Training in the Adolescent Work Sites

Training in adolescent work sites can range from systematic task episodes to informal experiences that hardly resemble training at all. Large companies appear to provide the most comprehensive and formal training programs for youth entering positions within the company that require an extensive knowledge of a cognitive area. However, large corporations do not provide systematic training programs for youth entering low-skilled jobs such as mail room deliverer. Such employees are typically provided an orientation to the corporation during which evaluation, pay raises, and promotional structures are explained, but job-task-related information is not provided.

Not all large corporations provide systematic and supportive training programs, however. One new hire employed at a large financial institution did

not receive an orientation to the organization nor a systematic training program. In fact, this employee did not experience a supportive work environment at any point following her employment and left the job site after 7 months.

Some corporations do, indeed, invest more time and money in training. With this investment in their new hires, management promotes an environment conducive to the development and formation of loyalty among new workers. Observers witnessed bonding occurring among managers, workers, and co-workers at work sites that provided more systematic training opportunities for new hires than in those settings that had not. New hires who work in trainingrich job environments are more likely to stay on the job than new hires who work in job settings without systematic training programs and supportive work environments.

Most youth do not obtain jobs at corporations that provide a systematic and supportive training program. Most work in small businesses or in establishements that employ less than 20 workers per work site during any given shift. Training in these settings is more informal and varied. Smaller establishments use informal training by management more frequently. Smaller establishments typically pay lower wages as well. Job-hopping also occurred more frequently in smaller establishments. This may be due to the more rigorous screening process larger corporations follow in hiring new employees. However, the major factor in the high turnover rate among adolescent workers appears to be the lack of a systematic and supportive training environment for youth within the worksite. Youth move from a school environment that shapes students to respond to formal authority figures through frequent feedback and evaluation, such as comments and grades (Sieber 1979) to a work environment where evaluation infrequently occurs. In fact, the evaluation process within the adolescent worksite is sporadic at best.

Since smaller establishments have more informal training and evaluation proceedings, success on the job in these settings depends more upon a combination of personality and skills than on formal standards such as attendance and punctuality, knowledge of work tasks, quantity of work, and the like. Managers in these businesses are free to hire and fire youth based on the managers' own needs and personal preferences. Several cases reported here point this out clearly. For example, John, an employee at a roller rink, was fired

for calling in sick on a rainy Monday morning. The manager assumed that John didn't want to ride the bus in the rain; within 2 days after John called in sick, he was replaced. In contrast, a second youth employed in a health spa negotiated an extended leave of absence from his job setting. Terry had excellent skills due to his interests in body building and was a valued employee from the perspective of both the clientele and management. Terry had an outgoing personality and got along very well with his manager, Mark.

Young workers in smaller establishments do not have clearly defined duties. During one work site observation, the observer saw a receptionist greeting customers and answering the phones. During the second observation, the observer saw the receptionist mopping the floor and cleaning the restrooms. Many young workers complain that they never know what to expect and dislike these variations in their job. Managers who provide youth with a clear set of duties to ensure that youth know exactly what is expected help to foster success on the job. Through clearer job descriptions and more systematic training and evaluation procedures, managers at work sites that predominately recruit within the youth labor market might minimize the chance of getting caught in the hiring-firing cycle.

It is probably the case that many youth entering the labor market do not receive sufficient performance evaluations. What does constitute a satisfactory, employee performance evaluation system? Landy, Barnes, and Murphy (1978) found that the evaluation process is central to many personnel decisions. The likelihood of goal acceptance on the part of the worker depends to some degree on the individual's current perception of the fairness of the system used to assess the current levels of performance. Mount (1983) agrees that performance evaluations are considered fair and accurate if they are characterized by the following:

- Frequency
- Familiarity on the part of the evaluator with the performance-level of the person being evaluated
- Agreement between the evaluator and the employee on specific job duties assigned to the employee
- A cooperatively designed plan to help the subordinate eliminate perceived job-related weaknesses

As youth move from school to work, they need to become more assertive in asking key questions--What is expected of me? and How am I measuring up? As students, they continually have had course requirements and grading procedures clearly spelled out to them. Now, as workers, they frequently do not know how they are being evaluated. New hires from the youth labor market are not provided sufficient feedback on their performance. It is clear that a major portion of training in adolescent work sites was completed by the new hire's co-workers. The new hires themselves reported that a co-worker's contributions to their training was most important when compared to the efforts of others. Co-workers did, indeed, have a very important role in acclimating the new hire to the worksite. Yet, many youth enter the work site from school environments which do not encourage team-learning situations. This is the case because most school settings emphasize competition and individual achievement. Educators need to prepare youth for the school-to-work transition. By encouraging more team-learning opportunities and modeling a realistic business environment in their classrooms, educators can make a contribution to easing the school-to-work transition for the young work force.

Employers need to spell out the exact job duties of a position and the evaluation criteria used to evaluate a new employee at the time the new employee is hired. A thorough orientation and frequent feedback sessions need to be provided for the adolescent worker if a successful employment period is expected.

Quits and Firings among Adolescent Workers

Factors contributing to quits and firings occurring among young workers are complex and varied. The points of view of both employer and the young worker are often at odds with respect to performance expectations, commitment to the work organization, and long-range prospects. These conflicting perspectives indicate that very often a less than complete organizational socialization occurs to align new employees with the norms of their workplaces. However, variance in expectations between employers and adolescent workers also occurs in situations that do not result in job leaving or termination. In some cases, employers take greater care in orienting their new employees, and in other cases, these conflicting perspectives simply do not become problematic.

Job changes among adults can be understood by paying specific attention to the experiences of youth inside workplaces. Past research has focused on wages, motivations, and employers' attitudes without due consideration of the ways that young people are initiated into workplaces. This neglects a very important issue. After examining a central act in career development--that of leaving jobs--we can conclude that considerable confusion surrounds job passages involving young workers. Misperceptions from the point of view of the employer and young worker impede young people's legitimate acceptance in the work force. Just as is the case with other organized activities, more deliberate attempts on the part of employers to create oppportunities for young people would likely alter the current image of young workers as unstable and unmotivated employees.

In summary, the case studies of youth in work settings reported here provide an anthology of the meaning of work for adolescents employed in organizationally and technologically diverse work settings. The research has uncovered the nature of workplace processes affecting all young workers' job experience and future mobility, namely, finding a job, combating negative attributions, fitting into a job, receiving training, negotiating authority, and quitting or losing a job. Although it is difficult to generalize from the report, the research has indicated that this account of the transition to work by out-of-school, noncollege-educated youth must consider at least three processes. All young people entering jobs can benefit by understanding that these six dimmensions of job-related experiences are likely to become issues at some point in their work lives.

REFERENCES

Bar-Tal, D. "Interactions of Teachers and Pupils." In New Approaches to Social Problems, edited by I. H. Frieze, D. Bar-Tal, and J. S. Carroll. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979.

Borman, K. "Review of Case Studies on Equity and Schooling." In The Annual Review of Socialization and Sociology of Education, edited by Ronald Corwin. New York: Jai Press, 1980.

Borus, M. "Summary and Policy Implications." In Tomorrow's Workers, edited by M. E. Borus. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982.

Corwin, R. "Organizational Skills and the Deskilling Hypothesis." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, forthcoming.

Harvey, John H., and Weary, G. Perspectives on Attributional Processes. Dubuque: William C. Brown Co., 1981.

Hills, S. Personal Communication, 16 November 1984

Landy, F. D., Barnes, J. L., and Murphy, M. R. "Correlates of Perceived Fairness and Accuracy of Performance Evaluations." Journal of Applied Psychology 63 (1978): 751-754.

Mount M. "Comparisons of Managerial and Employee Satisfaction with a Performance Appraisal System." Personal Psychology 36 (1983): 99-110.

New York Times, 30 September 1984.

Ogbu, J. "Stockton California Revisited: Joining the Work Force." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, forthcoming.

Seiber, R. T. "Classmates as Workmates: Informal Peer Activity in the Elemenatry Schools." Anthropology and Education Quarterly 10 (1979): 207-235.

Spring, J. "The Government and the Schools: The New Partnerships." In Becoming a Worker, edited by K. M. Borman and J. Reisman. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, forthcoming.

Van Maanen, J. Organizational Careers: Some New Perspectives. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977.